

"MISS VANITY"

BEING THE REMINISCENCES AND LETTERS OF "N. L."

Edited by the Finder, Mary Hamilton Park

This intimate account of the life and light-mindedness of an unknown young woman, moving, presumably, in the social circles called by the newspapers "smart," was discovered by me in the secret drawer of an old table bought at a second-hand auction-room, and, after vain attempts on my part to discover any of the people mentioned—a fact which leads me to suppose that real names are not given—is published by me as a warning to other young women of like levity of disposition.

M. H. P.

I.

I REMEMBER that the room itself was dark when I woke, but a sharp triangle of light marked where the door into the hall was ajar, and I presently became conscious of the sound of music and many voices floating up from the regions below, and, nearer by, of the excited tones of my nurse and the housemaids as they leaned over the banisters discussing the guests and their costumes. I sat up in bed, and wondered how I had so far forgotten myself as to fall asleep at all on a night when my grandfather was giving a ball. To be sure I had made Louise promise (in case I obligingly shut my eyes for a few minutes) to call me when the people went down to supper, but of course she had forgotten. I had found the French, as nurses, glib in promise and poor in performance. I slipped over the side of my crib, and made my way, barefooted and reproachful, to join her. A row of bent backs, dark skirts and stiff, white apron bows confronted me as I stood rubbing my dazzled eyes in the hall. The music was playing a march. I knew the difference between marches and waltzes, for I could hum an air correctly almost before I could speak. I pushed my way between two of the hunched figures, and, standing as tall as I could on my little naked toes, peered

over the banisters. People were going down to supper.

I was voluble in my accusations, and Louise was cross with me for having waked up, but one of the other women lifted me, and I leaned forward, and watched the long procession of shining satin trains, pink shoulders and black coats as it wound its way round the oval of the stairs down to the ground floor, where supper was being served. I knew what beautiful things were on the supper table; what long, smooth, light-green fishes, what concerted pieces in nougat and sugar! And I, myself, had helped Alphonse, the fat old French cook, to hang candied cherries on a candy tree which was to grace the very center of the board—for this was before the days of little tables and "sit-down" suppers. I knew the glories that awaited the guests, and I envied them with all my heart, and longed to be a grown-up young lady, with bare shoulders and a shining satin train, stepping proudly down the stairs on the arm of the grandest gentleman at the ball. Only I hoped he would not be bald! So many of my grandfather's friends—I never knew how many till I looked at them over the banisters that night—were thus afflicted. I was very sorry for them. I knew I should have hated to be bald.

Louise snatched me out of the house—

maid's arms, and carried me off to bed before the last straggling black coat disappeared; but, though she shut the door, not all the light and gayety and music remained outside with her; in my ears the march still sounded, past my eyes the many-colored silks still swam, and in my excited mind the ball was at its height. I lay quiet as long as I could—it seemed to me for hours—but finally I slipped out of my crib again, and softly opened the door.

The hall was deserted. Its late occupants had doubtless flitted down the back stairs to closer participation in the festivities, and there was no one to stop me if I chose to make investigations on my own account. The polished floor felt cold to my bare feet, and I went back for my bedroom slippers. I could not find them in the semi-darkness, but I knew that my best pink sandals lay by a certain chair near the dressing table, where they had been put down and forgotten after my return from dancing school that day. I sat down on the floor and pulled them on, and, though I knew I could ill afford the time, I buttoned the pink buttons of both straps. Then I stole out, and made my way cautiously downstairs. I don't know what I meant to do when I started, probably only to watch and listen a little from some place nearer the heart of things, but the laughter and music drew me on, and before I realized it, I was standing at the door of the ballroom.

A few people had come up from supper, and were sitting or standing about in groups. The band was playing away bravely, though no one seemed to be going to dance. Near the door stood a very fine lady in a white dress; she was holding an enormous bouquet of violets and crimson roses, and talking to my grandfather and several gentlemen, one of them in the dress uniform of the navy. After the first look of surprise, she smiled at me, and I advanced, wide-eyed and wondering, but bold as one is in dreams. She held out her hand. I abandoned my grasp of my nightgown, which at once slipped halfway down my shoulders, and stretched out a confidential foot.

"I have on my best pink shoes," I volunteered, "the ones I wear at my dancing class."

All the men laughed, and even my grandfather's grave expression relaxed a little, as he lifted me in his arms to carry me upstairs again.

"Where is your nurse?" he said. "Is there nobody in this house who can look after you?"

I murmured something about Louise having gone away for a minute, and my not being able to go to sleep, and wanting so much to see the party.

The men praised my spirit, and the lady raised her bouquet, and gently stroked my cheek with the flower heads. I clasped it with both hands.

"May I please have this?" I inquired.

She nodded, and I was borne away in triumph, clutching my unlooked-for treasure. To the five-year-old mind roses seem imperishable.

The next morning I had forgotten what the lady looked like, but I did remember to pray for my grandfather's bald-headed friends, and took some pains to inform him that I had done so.

This was my first venture into the grown-up world, which I considered it the very point and pinnacle of happiness to reach.

Owing to the ill health of my father, my parents lived abroad, and I, with my grandfather and my aunts, in New York. An only child, brought up among older people, speaking their language, imitating their manners and following their customs as nearly as might be, I was, as a little girl, half precocious and half simple; gentle, with sudden lapses into mischief; considerate for others, but most indulgent to my already sufficiently indulged little self.

I was spoiled, of course. There was no one of my own age to contradict me. I had plenty of amusement, and so many toys that the supply was constantly in excess of the demand. I never liked my big dolls. My favorite playthings were a dappled rocking-horse (upon which I disported myself in a long, pink silk petticoat "like a real lady"), and a box of paper dolls, who could be made to go

through the most grown-up adventures. Later I was happiest when I could settle myself somewhere with a paint box and an old magazine to color, and get some one to read to me. Miss Strickland's "Queens of England" as fact, and the "Waverley Novels" as fiction, were a good deal mixed in my mind, but no doubt they helped to develop my character in spots. I speculated a good deal about older people, their lives and their love affairs, but always from the point of view of the intelligent onlooker or confidante. I had not aspired to any leading rôle myself when at fifteen I suddenly found I was in possession of a lover. Not a very ardent one, perhaps; indeed, I should hardly have known he was mine, had it not been for his sister's hints, and certain delicious, giggling jokes on the part of my girl friends.

He had just graduated from the naval academy, and was several years older than I, tall and sunburned, with large bones and white teeth. Altogether a very satisfactory acquisition, if one valued men by the yard. I began to hold my head up, and permit myself the little airs and graces which I had, until this moment, admired passively in other people. I practiced them rather timidly at first, but still I practiced them, and I felt as if every one who saw me was saying, "Nina Langdon has a lover," and at fifteen a lover is an everlasting possession.

We were at the seaside that summer, and in the out-of-door life, the riding and bathing, and tennis playing, boys and girls—especially those whose fathers and mothers had been friends—were thrown much together. I saw a great deal of Master Alaburton; and I wept a great deal in secret when our holiday time came to an end, and he was ordered away to join his ship. I pitied myself for being left forlorn, and him for being obliged to leave me (afterward I had reason to believe he was really chafing to be off, and walk his quarter-deck, or perform whatever duty it was, which raised young gentlemen most directly to the rank of admirals), and I pictured all the terrors of a wreck in midocean

before he had so much as packed his trunks for departure.

I remember my farewell speech to him, often rehearsed, and shakily delivered when I met him at the beach that last morning, coming up the steps to the bathing houses.

"Good-by, Mr. Alaburton," I said, "and always remember you leave one true friend behind you."

I was dry and crisply frilled, and most anxious to unburden myself of this masterpiece, the careful selection of many hot and many cold sentences conned over in the watches of the night.

He was dripping wet from a plunge in the surf, and a good deal embarrassed, as any young gentleman might be thus arrested and forced, with the water trickling from his front hair down his nose, to take leave of the lady of his affections before a hundred eyes.

But I could not help that. The opportunity was there, and I seized it. I knew I should have liked him to say something of the kind to me, and therefore I said it to him heedless of time or place.

So he went away, and I was very miserable for several weeks; very intimate with his sister, and very attentive to his mother—a handsome old lady of forbidding aspect—whenever I met them.

I had always been an affectionate sort of child, and I cherished the thought of my sailor sweetheart with the tenderest melancholy as long as I could. But by and by I ceased to watch the stars at night and to sliver (except on my own account) when the winds blew. I tried to keep on liking Master Alaburton in imagination, however, long after I had stopped in reality; because I was so sure he would be unhappy if he knew that my heart interests were now balanced between Ralph Tempest, a grave boy who talked to me in long words upon learned subjects, and Harold Buckstone, a young gentleman of sporting tastes who drove tandem and rode, fast and furiously, to hounds.

At first this fickleness distressed me, but I gradually convinced myself that a certain amount of coquetry belonged to

the character of a "charming woman," and that if Humphrey Alaburton had misunderstood the "frank expression of my sincere regard" it was not, in any way, my fault. I wanted him to be pleased with me whenever he came home—I always wanted every one to be pleased with me—but in the meantime I wanted to amuse myself, and this I proceeded to do, to my own entire satisfaction and the discomfiture of my two admirers. I do not suppose Helen of Troy was much prouder than I when they quarreled about me to the verge of severing what had once been a close friendship. I walked with squared shoulders and swinging skirts; I had my queue tied with a larger bow, and cocked my hat at the sauciest angle; I made appointments to bathe with one and ride with the other; I reveled in small intrigues and large sentiments. Finally, I induced Ellen, the excellent woman who had succeeded Louise as nurse and now attended me as maid, to buy me a brown curl, the color of my own hair (on the solemn assurance that it was meant for a joke, and not to wear), and this I divided between them before I departed, entranced with my own wickedness, for town and my winter studies.

II.

During the Christmas and Easter holidays I was allowed to go to several small dances given for very young people, and there I chattered and flirted to my entire content. I never had the heart, even if I had had the ill breeding, to be rude to the dull boys, as so many of my more-advanced companions were, but I flouted the young gentlemen who showed any disposition to become my slaves, and courted the attention of those who appeared indifferent to the "swimming gait," and "melting, Andalusian glance," which I fondly hoped I possessed in common with Mr. Washington Irving's heroines, the "Jacintas" and "Zorahaydas," whom I admired.

Even a little girl's first taste of power is intoxicating, and I was exceedingly proud of the mischief I made.

But Nemesis was approaching in

swift strides. I fell in love. It was the next summer. I was sixteen, and going to pay a visit to a friend of mine, the daughter of a friend of my mother's, who had a house on the New Jersey coast. I had never been allowed to stay away from home before—just as I had never been allowed to read anything but English, instead of American, children's books—because my aunts had been brought up with the same restrictions. But my mother, writing from abroad, had expressed a wish that, if the opportunity offered, I might find companions among the children of her old friends, and now here was an invitation, and an opportunity, and I was going. I already knew Marian Exmouth slightly—she was a year older than I—but her father and mother I had never seen. However, I had lived too much among older people to be shy, and I was always eager for change.

What a fuss I made about the packing of my trunk, until at last Ellen, whose temper was, to tell the truth, none of the longest, bade me leave her in peace, and go to my storybooks, much as if I were still the little girl of whom she had first been engaged to take care. I went; but not until I had seen the piles of flounced petticoats hidden under my best evening dress—a little white striped silk polonaise, looped over a petticoat of the same—in which I greatly admired myself. Who knew that I might not be going to a dance! Who knew, indeed, what gayeties I might not be allowed to enjoy if Mrs. Exmouth were an indulgent woman!

She could not be an overcareful one, I thought, when, as I stepped out of the train, Marian greeted me with the announcement: "Jack Cary will drive us down to the beach in his dogcart, and we will just have time for a swim before luncheon." She added that she was very glad I had come, and if I'd give her my check the expressman would bring up my trunk in the course of the afternoon.

I don't think I knew the word "casual" in those days, and, if I had, might have been too polite to apply it to this reception; but somehow an arrival un-

superintended by an elder, or an old servant, seemed to me a trifle uncere-
monious.

"Won't Mrs. Exmouth want me to stop at the house first?" I inquired; and was assured that Mrs. Exmouth did not expect to see us till lunch time.

On the other side of the station the dogcart was waiting. A tall, thin young woman with a graceful figure and an ugly face sat in front. The driver's seat was empty, and at the horse's head stood a rather short, slight man, with good shoulders, delicate, prominent features and a blond mustache.

"If one of you will be kind enough to drive, I'll get in behind," he said, as soon as Marian had, in her good-natured, offhand way, introduced him to me. "Perhaps Miss Langdon——"

But Miss Langdon infinitely preferred sitting at the back beside her friend, to driving a strange gentleman's strange horse.

"Do not ride or drive other people's horses, for, if you injure them, you never can replace them," had been one of the rules laid down for my guidance.

Mr. Cary got up beside the tall young woman, and in a second more we were rolling briskly down the sunny, dusty road to the beach.

It seemed quite a long drive to me, but perhaps that was because the gay jokes and local allusions of my three companions were, for the most part, unintelligible to me, and because moving swiftly through a landscape, backward, has always made me giddy. And when we did arrive, this beach was not as the other beaches which I knew. The waters of a broad inlet cut between the strip of sand, with its bathing houses and gaudy tents, and the mainland. The inlet was crossed by a narrow wooden bridge for foot passengers only, so we left the cart in charge of a man who seemed to be waiting for it, and laughingly raced each other for the little toll-house on the other side, where they sold tickets for the bathing houses, and buns for the hungry bathers. The two girls made Mr. Cary buy them a bountiful supply, declaring that they could easily eat a dozen or more, and their luncheons

also. I was rather shocked—having been strictly enjoined never to let any one pay for anything for me—and also rather hungry at the sight of the buns, which were brown and puffy.

I went with Marian to her house, and waited outside while she made herself ready. She was of a high-nosed, rosy, wiry-haired type of beauty, and I thought her very handsome in her bathing dress. I, myself, partly because of more rules (against borrowing), and partly because no garment belonging to her could possibly have fitted my slim little person, had nothing to do but sit in the sand and watch the others. And the water was so blue and sparkly, and the waves broke in such clean, straight lines that I could not help envying them while they were in the ocean, and feeling a trifle lonely when they came out, and I still sat on, looking at the many groups of unknown people, who all seemed to be enjoying themselves, hovering here and there like gnats in the sunshine.

I was very glad when Mr. Cary, who had dressed more quickly than the others, came to talk to me. He had a quiet, sleepy manner, and the very gentlest voice I ever heard. Marian had contrived to whisper to me that he was attentive to the tall girl with the plain face, and I wondered at it greatly. Still, older people did take unaccountable fancies to one another, as I had often had occasion to observe. He must be ten or fifteen years older than I, and she—but I would not trouble my head about her! A grown-up man was talking to me, and I must do my very best to entertain him. I had a great respect for age at that time. If it had been a boy I should have flattered, and flirted, and flouted as was my custom, but now I "conversed," with engaging dignity and ingenuousness. I thought he did not seem particularly pleased when the tall girl joined us, and so I hoped I had succeeded in amusing him.

We drove home in the same order in which we came, and Marian and I were dropped at the gate of the Exmouth's house.

It was a rambling, dull-red and brown

shingle building, all overweighted with piazzas and vines, like every other house in its vicinity. Mrs. Exmouth was standing in the doorway looking vaguely in the direction from which we had come. She was short and broad, had reddish-yellow hair, and a troubled face, which had once been pretty. She greeted me warmly, with a great deal of emphasis on a great many words.

"How do you *do*, my dear? I hope you are very *well*," Marian *told* me she was going to meet you. I'm so glad she *did*. And what do you hear from your *mother*? I hope she is *very well*. And your *father*? Isn't that *nice*? And is your *grandfather* well? And *how* are your aunts?"

"Is lunch ready, mamma?" demanded Marian, cutting short these interested inquiries, to my great relief, for I found it hard to introduce any variety into my truthful replies.

"I really don't *know*, my dear," returned Mrs. Exmouth, plaintively. "It ought to be, but your father spoke so *severely* to Emma this morning that she has been in *tears* ever since, and though he *says* he was perfectly *right*, it is apt to make the meals late. Perhaps you'd better *see*."

These domestic details embarrassed me somewhat, and a household where the master scolded the women servants till they were incapable of work, and the mistress lamented the occurrence in perfect helplessness seemed an odd sort of household to be staying in. However, Mr. Exmouth was civil enough to me, though his dull eye, hatchet face, and dictatorial manner made me very shy about addressing him. He snubbed his wife whenever she opened her mouth, and was in turn snubbed by Marian, of whom he seemed a little in awe. Indeed, I soon found that this young person did as she liked in almost all respects, her mother venturing only a mild remonstrance in the words, "Marian tells me I am *old-fashioned*, but in my day ladies did not do so and so;" and her father usually growling out that he "wouldn't have it," and then taking care to be out of sight when the time came for the thing to be done.

In this way we went off to a supper party on the beach that night, chaperoned nominally by two frisky little married ladies, whom I had never heard of before, and of whose antics I knew my aunt would strongly disapprove. I had rather a cheerless time of it. I knew no one but Mr. Cary, who disappeared with the tall girl early in the evening. I felt young, and strange, and out of my element; vaguely understanding that there were things about these people which would repel me if I came in contact with them, and yet longing to be as merry as they were. A great bonfire had been made on the sand, supposably for the baking of clams, and for some time I amused myself watching its yellow glare against the blue moonlight, and listening to the songs which some college boys were singing to a banjo accompaniment. Marian had named the boys to me, but the chill of sinking spirits was upon me, and I could not talk. I was heartily glad when, at twelve o'clock, the last straggler had been collected, and we turned our faces homeward. As we neared the wooden bridge I heard Mr. Cary's voice behind me.

"Well," he said, "have you had a pleasant evening?"

"Very pleasant indeed, thank you," I returned, conventionally.

"Your voice sounds tired."

"I am a little tired."

"Homesick?"

"N-no—"

"Lonely?"

"Perhaps, a little."

"I wish I had been with you. I should have taken better care of you."

"Oh, but you had—had something else to do, probably—I mean, of course." (It pleased me to be a little knowing about his love affair.)

"Nothing that I liked half so well as I should have liked talking to you."

I knew this couldn't be true, but it was more like the language of my boys, and besides, my spirits were rising a little.

"Then you did think I was nice to talk to this morning?" I said. "I am so

glad, for I did my best to please you, you know."

"Did you want to please me?"

"Of course I did."

"Do you want to please me now?"

"Y-yes."

"Then promise to go on another party that I'll get up to-morrow night. I will arrange it with Miss Exmouth. Will you?"

I laughed and nodded. He had stopped, under pretense of lighting a cigarette, and the people ahead were waiting for us. So was the gateman in the little tollhouse, who had been kept up beyond his usual hour for closing the bridge, but saw compensation crumpled in Mr. Cary's left hand.

Three matches that gentleman had struck, and three times had the wind blown them out. Suddenly he thrust the edge of the bill he had been holding into the flame of the gate-keeper's lamp, lighted his cigarette, tossed the charred paper to the man, and laughing softly at his astonished face, hastened on with me to join the party.

I was secretly much impressed by this action, which appeared to me a combination of recklessness and generosity unparalleled in any novel I had ever read, and it was not until later in the night, long after I ought to have been sound asleep, that I began to distress myself about how much of the value had been burned away from the gate-keeper's bill before he got it. I almost resolved to put the case to Mr. Exmouth—suppositiously.

After that night there was never again a time when I found myself neglected. I don't know what the tall girl felt, but my vanity blossomed like the rose. Not only did Mr. Cary give me a party—me, myself, as if I were entirely grown up—a party which drove in many different vehicles to the small inn of a neighboring village, had supper there and returned in the waning moonlight—but he organized or suggested others at which we were sure to see each other. He did his best to please me, and to be with me as much as possible. He took me to drive, and we were

lost in grass roads and green woods for hours. His boat was at my disposal, and we sailed up and down the inlet, alone, at sunset, when the water and the sky were all saffron and gold, and everything was so quiet that my least little laugh echoed back from the shore, and seemed to mock me—as well it might. We sailed also at night, the rest of the people in the stern, and he and I far up in the bow, the stars winking above our heads, and rocking below our feet when the boat rippled its way through their reflection. We were always together, and as often as might be, alone.

I knew very well that my aunts would disapprove of my conduct, but in despair of unknown conditions, they had told me at parting that anything Mrs. Exmouth allowed Marian to do, I might do also, and with this I stilled my conscience. Besides, the situation was a thing apart from rules and above permissions. He had told me that he was in love with me (I knew by my books that such things sometimes happened with great suddenness)—that no other woman had ever affected him as I did—and I believed him; that he cared for nothing and thought of nothing in the world but me and his horses. He called me a child—sometimes a "pretty child," but I carried myself proudly as became a woman. He had kissed me, and I felt I belonged to him forever. Marian might run wild, and romp, and flirt, as she listed, but for me—I had done with all such ways! Penelope was no more virtuously scornful of the suitors than I should have been of any mere boy who addressed words of admiration to me now. I was adored by a man.

To be sure it was a little early to settle one's self in life. Very few girls in novels, and none of my most distant acquaintances, had married at sixteen! Still, it was not without precedent—it had been done; only I doubted if my grandfather would let me do it. I wondered what he and my aunts would think of Jack. I wondered—having been brought up with an old-fashioned respect for "good family"—whether his people were known to my people. I wondered what my mother and father

would say. I was pretty sure I should be condemned to a long engagement—after all, I had hardly finished my education. But it did not seem to me that an education in dry facts was of much importance to an engaging little person such as I was confident I must be. Didn't Jack tell me at least twice a day that the slightest alteration would spoil me? And that was after I had told him I could not spell. (I had an ingenuous way of warning people about my failings, which I knew amused them, and spared me further responsibility). What a delightful life we were going to lead—not altogether in the country, I hoped, in spite of his sporting tastes, for I was town bred, and loved the lights and the pavements—but always together and always as happy as we were now. For I was as happy as the day was long, and hugged my delicious secret to my heart at night, pitying all women who lived to be old and ugly—as old as thirty-five, say, and as ugly as—well, the tall girl (poor tall girl! I hoped she didn't care much!), without knowing what it was to be in love with a man who loved you.

I don't know when it began to dawn upon me that these pictures needed a double signature; that if Jack really wanted to marry me it behooved him to ask certain questions which he had not, apparently, thought it worth while to ask. But of course it was all right. The last day of my visit was near, and he would never let me leave him without settling everything definitely. How did he know, said I to myself, tossing my head, that it was safe to give me so much liberty.

On Monday I was to go, and on Sunday afternoon he and I were walking through the fields together on our way to inspect the kennels and a new wing lately added to the queer little farmhouse which served the men of the neighborhood for a hunting-box and club. It was quite a usual Sunday afternoon's amusement for people to meet there, look at the dogs, discuss the chances of good runs in the autumn, drink tea on the piazza, and ride or drive or stroll away again.

I loitered along beside Jack, a little less contentedly than usual. It was hot, and I was troubled. Twice I had spoken of my departure, and twice he had asked me gently whether I should be sorry to go? Whether I should miss him a little? And when I answered, "You know I will—only you don't know how much," had replied, "Child, child, I don't see how I shall be able to get on without you," and sighed, and said nothing more.

"But you needn't get on without me very long," I suggested, timidly. "My grandfather's country place is not far from town. You will come and see me soon, won't you?"

"Yes," said Jack, but somehow there was no assurance in the "Yes."

We avoided the groups of people at the club, and went by ourselves to look at the kennels. But there was beginning to be a queer little pain in my heart, and I could hardly take the most superficial interest in the dogs, which were to Jack as so many individual friends.

We went to the stables next, and I was introduced to as many horses as were at home, and more than I could possibly be enthusiastic about.

At last my companion noticed my listless manner, and asked if I were tired. I nodded, smiling at him mechanically.

"Let us sit down here, and rest for a few minutes. You don't want to go back to all those people, do you? Was the walk too much for you? I'm so sorry."

We sat down on a great pile of hay between the open doors of the barn, which we were just passing. It was cool and shady, and the smell of the dried grass was sweet. Leaning back against the hay I could see out through the trees, across the flat meadows to the sea, and I could hear the laughter of the people on the piazza. I sighed involuntarily, and then looked at Jack to see if he had heard.

"What is the trouble, dear?" he said, in his gentle way, and I saw at once from his expression that he was going to kiss me.

"Oh, don't, please! Wait, Jack!" I whispered. "I don't mean I don't like it—I do, if it's all right; only, you see, it troubles me, because—because if things are to go on like this we ought to be engaged—and you know we're not."

It was out now. I shut my eyes, gasping, and wondering what would happen next. Would he catch me up, and tell me what a little fool I was? There was silence for a minute. Then he laughed.

"I promised my sister that I wouldn't marry for the next ten years," he said. "She and I have always hung together."

III.

It seemed a little hard that Marian should insist upon sitting up late in my room that night to talk when I longed so desperately to be left to myself. I was too dazed and stunned to realize how much I had been hurt, but I knew I would give the world to be alone in the dark to cry my eyes out in luxurious wretchedness. Why had this happened to me? What had I done to deserve it? How was I to bear the bewildering ache that was suddenly forcing itself upon me. I hardly listened to Marian's chatter, but it tormented me nevertheless. She told me all the wicked stories she knew to amuse me. They were not very many, nor very naughty, nor at all amusing. She wanted to exchange confidences with me about the past, and speculations about the future—she was "coming out" the next winter. She rallied me about my conquest, and I got cold all over as I gathered my courage together to ask her a question. Mr. Cary's sister, whom he had spoken of to me that day. Why had I never seen her—did she live with him—was he very fond of her? I took care to keep my head down as I spoke.

Marian knew her slightly. Supposed he was fond of her. Yes, they had lived together after the death of his mother—but Miss Cary had just been married. Marian wondered I had not seen it in the papers—but of course I would not

have been interested *then*! It was different now, wasn't it?

She laughed herself away to bed, and I slipped miserably into mine, stung with a thousand prickles of shame. So it had been nothing but the feeblest excuse! A clumsy barrier, hurriedly erected against my importunities. It was too awful! too humiliating! too ridiculous! And yet a little pitiful. I cried passionately for a long time. Then I got up and wrote a letter, that it might be all ready to send early in the morning in case I overslept myself—which did not seem likely. There could be nothing more to say now, and yet I wanted to make sure of an opportunity.

"DEAR JACK: I understand. At least I suppose I do. But please sit beside me in the train, for I want to talk to you about *other things*."

"NINA LANGDON."

Then an irrepressible postscript: "I must ask you something. Are you ashamed of loving me?"

"I'm afraid you sat up too late *talk-ing* last night, my dear," said Mrs. Exmouth, bidding me an affectionate farewell from the piazza steps. "Your eyes look tired. I often tell Marian that it is a *bad* habit. Give my love to your *mother* when you write, and to your *aunts*, and *remember* me to your *grand-father*. It has been so *nice* having you. Only I'm afraid you *haven't* amused yourself. I *wish* we could have done more—"

"You'll make her miss the train, Maria," growled Mr. Exmouth, as the horses started.

I was in a fever to be off, but it made little difference in the end. Either by accident or design Mr. Cary was late. One of his friends secured the seat beside me, and from his place behind, he could not very well talk of personal matters, even had he been eager to do so. It was not his fault—I told myself fifty times—and yet might he not have contrived something? But we parted without explanation. I had been sick with suspense until the last moment came, then I was dull with despair, and sud-

denly it was all over, and we were going our separate ways.

Every morning for weeks I hoped for a letter, and every afternoon I sat at a certain place in the grounds where I could watch the gate and the long sweep of carriage drive leading to the house. But neither letter nor lover came, and by and by the autumn passed, and we went back to town for the winter, and I tried to stop being sorry for myself. But it was not easy, and there were times when my wounded pride ached fiercely.

Poor Jack! Looking back I think I feel rather sorry for him. I was so grown-up in theory, I believed myself so entirely capable of conducting my own affairs, no wonder he thought I understood the game; and, oh, goodness! how embarrassed he must have been the day I proposed to him among the hay!

It took me a long time to get over the mortification of this remembrance. I went over the scene again and again at night; sometimes unhappy and sometimes furious, but always ashamed. I did not bear malice; I had enough sense to acknowledge that I also was to blame, but the experience made me somewhat incredulous of masculine protestations and reckless of masculine feelings. Of course I tried the readiest means of retaliation first.

The enforced quiet of the country had been maddening, but in town there were distractions. Mr. Alaburton, returning on leave, with larger bones and more nose than I remembered, was electrified at the way his "true friend" ordered him about. Harold Buckstone led a dog's life of it that winter, and as for Ralph Tempest, he pulled a longer face than even nature had intended and sneered heavy sneers, with classical allusions at the end, whenever my name was mentioned. The other boys used to tell me. Of course I did my best to live up to a roguish reputation, and was pleased when he accused me to my face of vanity, frivolity, conceit, and a desire to attract attention and create small effects.

"If all that is true," I said, insolently,

"why do you keep on being fond of me? You know you *are* fond of me."

"Because I believe you capable of better things," said he.

"Oh, nonsense!" I retorted. "It's because you like the color of my eyes, or the shape of—no, nobody *could* like the shape of my nose! Well, we'll say, the way I do my hair. No human boy ever liked a girl because she was 'capable of better things.' And you a Latin scholar and a student of human nature!"

"Since when this cynicism?" said he, sneering.

"Since crabbedness took to masquerading as wisdom," I returned.

"I'm not crabbed," he grumbled; "but I hate you to do things which provoke comment."

"Who commented, but you?"

"Nobody could help noticing the way you have been behaving lately."

"That's all because I sat on the stairs last night with Bob Churchill," I observed, addressing an imaginary listener. Bob Churchill was the Beau Brummell of a dancing class which I and the girls of my age attended. It met, all too infrequently for me, for I loved dancing, at the house of a very strict lady, a friend of my aunts', and a relation of Ralph's. Boys had lately been introduced into this Adamless Eden, for the purpose of improving our dancing, and forming our manners. Apparently the way I formed mine was open to question.

"There's no use in being cross," I went on, "you know well enough that no matter how much you disapprove of me you would be glad enough to have me play my 'cheap tricks' for your benefit only, wouldn't you?"

"Well, I suppose it would make a difference," acknowledged Mr. Tempest, sulkily; "though you might be a little more decent about it."

But this was what I could not be just then. Jack had waked me rather suddenly from soft, puppyish dreams of warm fires and domestic hearth rugs, and I was roused into a spirit of restless mischief which drove me to gnaw and worry everything about me that

could be gnawed and worried. Ralph happened to be made of a tough wood, excellent for the sharpening of teeth, and besides, he was only a boy—although a very solemn one—and why should I consider boys? I, with a history!

I am afraid the winter was not a very profitable one to me; for I studied as little as possible, practiced only such music as pleased my ear, and permitted me to express myself "passionately"; read novels inside my atlases, and made mademoiselle entertain me with her love affairs. I was eager to know if anybody had ever been put in quite so humiliating a position as mine before. It seemed not; at least I surprised neither spoken nor written confidence of the kind, and I began to be afraid my mistake was unprecedented. There was nothing left for it but to be a hardened woman of the world as soon as possible, so I plunged headlong into such small excitements as came my way, and dreamed of myself, gorgeously attired and glittering with jewels, leaning upon the arm of some English earl, or even duke (after all, a duke was quite as probable as an earl), and sweeping past Mr. Cary with the very slightest recognition civility allowed. This was not to be, of course, until I had become completely indifferent to him. I was uncomfortably conscious now that I should have all I could do not to run after him—at least, no, not run, but walk as fast as I could if I saw him in the street. It was seven months since we had parted, but I knew I had forgotten nothing.

About the end of March it occurred to my aunts that I was looking pale, and as my grandfather was going to Washington on business, it was decided that I should accompany him to see whether a change of air would not restore my color. I believed myself indifferent to the plan, and I held aloof from the packing at first. What did my best new fineries matter to me now? But yet—a woman of the world must be well dressed—let them go? And I saw that they went.

My grandfather was a charming, ruddy-faced old gentleman, with shining

white hair, which he wore in three tufts, a large one on top and smaller ones over each ear. He was thin and alert, nervous in temperament and dignified in manner. He was very fond of me, and extremely anxious that I should be a well-bred and well-educated woman. To this end he corrected my grammar, criticised my deportment, and directed my attention to such things as it behooves a miss of not quite seventeen to take note of. I was too reasonable not to appreciate the propriety of this instruction, but I was much too impatient to enjoy it, and the dear old gentleman used to complain that although I *seemed* to be giving him my attention, what he said went into one ear and out of the other in the most remarkable way. But before we had been twenty-four hours in Washington he taught me a lesson as to the unadvisability of listening with the eyes only, for happening to distract my mind during a lecture which he delivered at luncheon, upon high heels and the evils they engendered, I was fool enough to wear my favorite slippers down to dinner, and had the heels cut off them under my very nose because they induced to "cramped toes and a mincing gait."

If his triumphant air had been less amusing, this incident might have marred the harmony of the evening. But fortunately I possessed another pair of slippers (which I took care not to wear before grandpapa), and moreover, I had the satisfaction of writing a ludicrous account of the execution to my Aunt Susan who wore beautiful high-heeled shoes herself and would sympathize in the destruction of mine.

Poor grandpapa! he had never been in sole charge of me before, and he was dreadfully fussy about my clothes and my conduct. Nor did my first escapade reassure him much upon the latter point.

The President, who was a personal friend of his, was away at the time when we first arrived, but his son, a young man of nineteen or twenty, was at the White House, and with him was staying Reginald Trevor, a distant cousin of mine. I had seen the two driving to-

gether one morning when I was taking a demure walk with grandpapa, and being rather moped and lonely, the sight of a familiar face infused such warmth into my greeting that Regy presented himself at the hotel forthwith, and asked if I might drive with him that afternoon. Grandpapa hummed and hawed a little, but I assured him that my aunts had allowed me to drive with Harold Buckstone and Ralph Tempest at Newport, and as his business obliged him to leave me alone after luncheon he finally consented.

"But she cannot go out in that dog-cart I saw you perched upon just now," he said. "You must bring some carriage more suitable for a lady, and I should prefer your taking a groom."

"Of course, sir," said Reginald. "I should not think of coming without one."

And he was as good as his word, for when he arrived it was in the President's state landau, with two men on the box and a man behind. I was paralyzed with surprise when I saw it, but partly because I did not know how to say I wouldn't go (nor what to do with myself if I stayed at home), and partly in a spirit of bravado, I thanked fortune that grandpapa had already left the hotel, and, scurrying past Mr. Trevor and the footman, I skipped in with all possible haste. A small crowd had collected to see us start. I was much embarrassed, but resolute not to be frightened out of my drive.

"What possessed you to bring this equipage, Regy?" I asked, as I settled myself in my corner, and tried not to think I resembled Miss Podsnap in her father's custard-colored chariot, whom Dickens describes as "looking as if she had been put to bed to expiate some childish misdemeanor."

"Why, Alexis wanted the T-cart himself this afternoon," he answered, "and there didn't seem to be anything else I cared to drive. Anyhow, I felt lazy about it, and this is awfully comfortable. Don't you think so?"

"Oh, yes, it's very comfortable," I assented; "but I'm afraid it is a little conspicuous." And I glanced uneasily

from side to side, for the President's carriage was so well known that hats were flying off in all directions, and I began to wish I had not come. I begged Regy to order the horses turned into less frequented streets, and by and by we found ourselves outside the city; but even there an evil fate overtook us, or perhaps I should say met us, in the shape of a very old gentleman—unfortunately an acquaintance of my grandfather's—who was taking a ride, attended by his servant. When he saw us coming he backed almost into the ditch by the roadside, and waited there, bareheaded, for the chief executive to pass; and I need hardly say that when he discovered who we were, he trotted directly back into Washington, and told it as a good story at the club, to the fury of grandpapa and the shame of grandpapa's granddaughter, who did not hear the last of it for a long time. In fact, I was so scolded that I had to take refuge in tears of repentance before peace was declared.

I was considered too young to go out to dinner, or, generally in the evening, but in celebration of my restoration to favor, I was taken to the public reception at the White House. (The President had returned, and was, I hoped, above taking any interest in the conduct of stable affairs during his absence.) This was regarded more in the light of education than entertainment, but I happened to take the greatest pains to make myself nice, and I also happened to meet a young diplomat, one of the English secretaries, who was there with a party of New Yorkers known to my grandfather. They had been dining together, and had come on afterward to amuse themselves watching the crowd of queer people who flocked to shake hands with the President.

We sat together in a corner; we were struck dumb by the same purple-hatted, green-plushed lady; diverted by the same scraps of overheard conversation; delighted by the same good-natured, red-handed farm lad who made his awkward salutation to the man he had helped to elect with the wondering gaze of the calf at the passing train. We had

both been brought up on the "Slovenly Peter" book, we both adored Henry Kingsley's novels. We both were of opinion that a woman should flirt as a man fights—instinctively. We agreed about falling in love. He said, laughingly, that if he fell in love with a woman, he should either propose to her at once, or run away—there was no middle course. (These sentiments met with my most cordial approval.) Indeed, so congenial were we, that when the ladies of his party asked my grandfather whether they might take me with them to Mount Vernon the next day, and I heard Mr. Joscelyn was going also, my heart beat quite eagerly until the required permission had been given. I knew this was absurd, but—he was very good looking, he was *not* a boy, and he seemed to like me at once. There was that sudden ease between us which comes of mutual surface attraction.

Of course I was a broken-hearted woman, and he was not likely to be a duke, but after the day at Mount Vernon, and several other days, it seemed to me that there was a certain charm about a well-bred Englishman which made Americans—at least some Americans—seem a little crude. Even Jack— But here my heart reproached me. The only dignity of the situation lay in my being still devoted to the manner of man I had believed Jack to be.

All the same, my self-esteem was gratified, and my confidence somewhat restored when I left Washington. Mr. Joscelyn came to take leave of me at the station, saying that he was to be in New York very soon, and hoping that, perhaps, he might be allowed to call upon—my grandfather when he did so, and it seemed to me there *were* some things left in life to look forward to even if one had once had an unhappy love affair.

The pain had grown a little more bearable of late, but of course one got used to pain in time. That was one of the saddest things about human nature—the pain it grew used to! I supposed perhaps the change of air and scene had, as my aunts declared, done me good.

By and by I began to wonder when

Mr. Joscelyn was coming, but it was not until late in the spring that I met him one day at Jerome Park, where I had coaxed my grandfather to take me. We walked up and down the lawn together, and he did ask me whether I thought I could care for him? I had not the faintest idea what an answer in the affirmative would commit me to, so I hesitated, and, borrowing a leaf out of Jack's book, murmured something about "a family arrangement," and "not marrying till I was twenty-one" (which seemed little enough discouragement if he cared to wait); and then, moved by a sudden fit of conscience, I was almost beginning to tell him *why* I felt I had no affection to bestow upon anybody, when suddenly I realized that I had passed some one who was trying to bow to me.

I turned. There, a few paces beyond, stood the man whose unfading image I believed myself to be cherishing! It was Jack; and I had met him face to face, and passed him without recognition. Jack, sure enough, and after expecting for so long to see him—in the most unlikely places, too—it was the irony of fate that I should meet him like this and not know him, and, horror of horrors, not care! For, as I turned back and made him speak to me, I suddenly found that all tenderness was gone. I was only a little embarrassed. I could still pity myself for having been fond of him, but all the rest was surprise. I did not know what to think or feel. I had honestly believed myself unhappy, and the sudden lifting of the weight seemed to deprive me of balance.

Only one thing I was sure of—I should never again dare to take myself seriously. If I had, without knowing it, entirely recovered from my misplaced affection for Mr. Cary, how could I really have been in love with him? And if I had *not* been in love with him, why had I been at first so happy, and afterward so very miserable? How could I ever again place any reliance upon my taste? Or respect my own feelings? Or trust my own judgment?

I drove home in a state of utter be-

wilderment. Puzzled and disgusted, I gave myself up as a bad job, for like the maid in "Mr. Pepys' Diary," "I did not like myself nor anything I had done for a long time." But I had no desire to drown myself, on that account, as she did.

IV.

From eighteen to twenty-five is a far step; but, looking back, it seemed to me that I had slipped past those seven years as a child sidles from booth to booth in a long bazaar—amused by the jumping-jacks and punchinellos, enchanted by the gayly dressed marionettes, allured by the gingerbread toys; sometimes pausing to take a peep at the future in the conjurer's glass, sometimes hurried on by the crowd to the merry-go-round; never allowed to stop.

I did not appear to myself to have grown much older, but I was a great deal more variable; one day mad for amusement and reckless as to how I obtained it, and the next morbidly conscientious and self-reproachful.

At first I had lived feverishly from ball to ball, counting the hours till the lights could be turned up, as it were, and the performance begin again. Lights and music and dancing still intoxicated me, and one little flirtation was better than many Paris gowns. I objected to the word, of course, but when a too-candid friend once asked me "what I called it when I worked hard for weeks to persuade some men, for whom I did not care a button, that he was indispensable to me"—I was momentarily at a loss. If that was what I did, that was flirtation, undoubtedly, but I would not allow that I followed any such stupid old ways. What I worked for was to persuade *myself* that the man was indispensable! That was a much more amusing game, because one seemed to take equal risks with the other player. Only sometimes I was afraid I was getting too tender-hearted to play it any more. I was so sorry to stop if anybody's feelings were going to be hurt.

The winters I had always spent in

town, the summers in various places which were only registered in my memory as backgrounds to various incidents in a frivolous career.

As; *Newport*. Stayed with Mrs. Philo. The Duke of Maltowers was there. Middle-aged. Clever, charming and very bad, they say! He certainly looked so. But I rather liked him, and he taught me the mazurka, quite, as Mr. Pepys would say, like a "common, ordinary man." Arthur Willingham was quite attentive to me that summer. I was awfully pleased, because I thought I was taking him away from a prettier girl. I should not have had half such a nice time if it had not been for him; the young married women were too attractive. I never knew how much I liked him till after I went away. I wish he had liked me more seriously—or just the same seriously, only longer. I never saw him after he went back to join the governor-general in Canada, but I thought about him a great deal.

Mount Desert. Stayed with the Sacketts. Went out in a canoe with an elderly married man, who tried to make love to me. I was astonished—he being so stupid that I had not thought it of him! I did not want to hurt his feelings, so I pretended not to notice what he said, and landed him on an island, where I sent his little boy back later with the canoe to fetch him. Matilda Sackett said she had had *exactly* the same experience. I never heard of an experience Matilda hadn't had, but I dare say she spoke the truth that time. It is a very dull man who thinks all women like all love-making.

Long Island. Went in terrifically for riding, on account of Bob Seyton. Nearly broke my neck several times, but never was really hurt. (N. B. No more was he, though I did my best.) He used to say he'd rather trust a *horse* to me than to any one else, but he was more careful about his heart. I hate a cautious man! He had kind ways, though, and a gentle manner which reminded me a little of Jack. He was companionable out of doors, and fond of books in the house. I've always won-

dered how we should have got on if—

Lenox. Went out one evening on the Stockbridge Bowl with Charley Dangerfield in a boat. Stayed till half-past ten. Grandpapa went round and round the lake with a lantern looking for me. Made up my mind never to go visiting with grandpapa again.

The St. Lawrence. Houseful of people. High jinks of all sorts. Great burglar scare. All came out in our best nightgowns. Belwin Carlton slipped off the piazza roof with somebody's shutter. Said he was walking in his sleep. I always thought it odd. I played a great deal with two Canadians. One has married. The other is with the English troops in Egypt.

Et cetera! et cetera!

Then came a reaction. I began to be restless in idleness, and to think I wanted a serious object in life. One couldn't regard balls or the game of love in that light. Besides, balls and such games would be none the less enjoyable if one had something else by way of contrast.

And about this time I happened, for I forget what reason, to go one day through one of the big hospitals. The sights and sounds, the amount of wretchedness and suffering shut in under this single roof, appalled me. I could not get it out of my head. And there were so many hospitals, and in each of them so many miserable people! Accident and illness, here and there, I was by no means ignorant of, but taken in a mass it was very ghastly. I couldn't go to sleep that night for thinking of still figures lifted from ambulances; stiff figures carried through corridors; uneasy heads in many-folded bandages; voices that groaned; faces that were distorted; abnormally patient little children with tented bedclothes and weighted limbs; horribly frightened little children, who implored the doctors not to hurt them! It seemed to me that the whole world was undermined with suffering, and set about with sighs, and all the time here was I, poor little silly moth, trying to amuse myself in the midst of it all. I felt I must do

something; I must help somebody! If I could in any way stop or lessen the pain of the least wound it would be worth while to have lived.

So I turned my thoughts seriously to nursing; all the more that I was in my heart a coward about such things, and hated the sight of blood. It would be the greater merit if I conquered this weakness, and accordingly I broached the subject to my aunts as gently as I could.

"My dear," said Aunt Susan, who was always temperate. "To help truly in the work of the world is not to step out of your place unnecessarily, but to do your duty in the state of life into which you have been called." (I recognized the catechism.) She also pointed out that the strain would probably be beyond my strength.

Aunt Anne said *she* had no patience with these sudden "calls," which caused young women to neglect their homes and families, as she observed, for the excitement of nursing paupers in the society of young medical students. If a girl were all alone in the world and forced to earn her own living that was different; but, for her part, she did not believe in vocations. "I can't stay and nurse you through pneumonia, mamma, because I must go and take care of the sick in hospitals," did not appeal to *her* common sense.

"But a course of hospital training might enable one to take better care of one's mother, one would think, particularly in pneumonia," I suggested.

My aunt replied that any sensible woman could obey a doctor's instructions, and that there was a great deal of nonsense talked about trained nurses!

I did not agree with her, but I did begin to see my project in a new and rather less exalted light. Perhaps I had been a fool, but as far as I knew I had been sincere in my folly, and I was not disposed to give it up quite without an effort. I looked at my two aunts—Aunt Susan, Ceres-like, handsome, calm, suggesting bountiful sympathy, care and loving kindness; Aunt Anne, small, alert, active, provoking and witty—and I wondered whether

they had made the very most of life; whether they had found it difficult to fall into the everyday rut of old age, and whether I should so fall in spite of struggles. They had neither of them married; but I meant to marry by and by, for I held that an unmarried woman missed what my nurse used to call "The half of her life." They were very good to me, very indulgent, very fond of me, my grandfather and my aunts, but some day I wanted my own man!

He need not be rich. If I had ever been ambitious of making what people call a good match, I was so no longer. But there were certain things he must be. Strong in body, broad in mind, and skilled in the ways of women. In the meantime, I was a good deal bored with myself—except just when I was persuading some new person to like me.

I attacked my grandfather about the hospital, and he laughed.

"Try your own way, my dear," he said, "and we'll see what comes of it."

I put on my best clothes, and went to see the superintendent. (Sometimes the right color of a gown, or the height of a feather, makes it harder for a man to refuse a request.) He referred me to the lady who presided over the training school, and she, dear soul, did not know quite what to make of me at first.

"I want very much to study here," said I, rather embarrassed.

"As a nurse?" said she, pulling forward a chair for me.

"As a nurse," said I, sitting down. "Can't I, please?"

"But we haven't any vacancies, and there is a long waiting list. I can give you a paper of application to fill out, of course— Have you ever tried anything of the sort before? What made you think of it?"

"Well, I'm tired of leading a perfectly useless life—and I want to help a little to make things easier for people—and I am an awful coward, and I should like to get over it—"

"I see," she said. And I dare say she did see—further than I did.

"Are you strong?" she went on. "You know the work's not easy, and

living all the time in the hospital air—"

"Oh, but I didn't mean to live here!" I exclaimed. "I meant to come down every day, at whatever hour you said, and stay until my time of duty were over. If I might only help in the wards, I *think* I should learn. And I want to learn practically, or not at all."

For some time it looked like "not at all," for such a request as mine was, it appeared, unprecedented. I must be a whole nurse—provided I were acceptable at the time when my name came under consideration—or none! And I was not prepared to go to quite such lengths as living their life involved. But by degrees, and by much coaxing and wheedling, I gradually persuaded her that what I wanted was not so impossible, and she finally promised to give me lessons herself. I could not join the nurses' classes, but I might visit in the wards, and she would direct the nurses to show me whatever they could.

I went home in a delightful state of mingled fear and elation.

I bought all the books the training school used, and studied diligently. I went three times a week, and shuddered and shivered inwardly at the things I saw and heard. I was taught to change sheets, to move patients, to mix poultices, to bandage limbs. The doctors were kind, and rather amused at my performances. They delighted in offering to show me the most horrible things just to watch my courage, like Bob Acres, oozing out at my finger ends.

There was one merry little curly-headed house surgeon, who never met me without a cheerful, "Good-morning, Miss Langdon; got a major operation on for this afternoon; aren't you coming up?" and when I replied hastily, "Oh, not *this* afternoon, thank you very much, Dr. Donald," would retire chuckling. But after I had been going to the hospital for some months it occurred to me that if I had gained any experience or acquired any nerve to test, now was the time to test it; so the next day when I met him on the stairs, I told him timidly that if he *had* any-

thing, not too dreadful, in the way of surgery to show me, I would come and look on—as long as I could.

"Oh, you're all right," he responded, briskly. "Let me see—aneurism of the subclavian artery. *That's* not bad. Cutler operates in half an hour. Get Miss Benson to bring you up to the amphitheatre," and he scampered off, leaving me almost too weak in the knees to continue the ascent.

But I was not going to give in. With my heart leaping from my mouth to the soles of my shoes, and my eyes beholding mists of purple and green, I accompanied the head nurse to the amphitheatre. A dome of glass, a floor of asphalt, a semicircle of tiered seats filled with students; the operating doctor and his assistants in jack boots and white aprons; a table, and a paraphernalia of baskets and jars and instruments set about it; the nurses in crisp, rustling dresses, moving to and fro. I felt every muscle of my face strained in dread of what was coming.

The patient, a woman, was brought in. She was already under ether, and her breathing was loud and harsh, almost as if she snored.

The doctor took up a knife, and I shut my eyes. If I had been called upon to *do* anything, no matter how much or how little, I think—I hope I could have done it, but to stand and look on was beyond endurance.

The nurse shook my arm. "Don't faint," she said, "with all those students looking at you, or Dr. Cutler will scold me for having brought you."

"I'm not going to faint," I whispered, "but I can't look. It is so dreadful to see any one deliberately cut."

"After all you wanted to learn! Why, I thought you had more courage. I'm ashamed of you," she answered, reproachfully.

"Oh, all right," I cried, desperately, moving forward.

"This table is too much circumnavigated," said Dr. Cutler, crossly, and I drew back with a relief I could hardly disguise.

By dint of keeping my eyes focused upon nothing, I managed to hold them

open, but everything was mercifully blurred to me, and I thought I was doing pretty well until, just as I heard the operator say, "And so, gentlemen, this is all we can do for this poor woman," I found myself swaying against a figure near me, whose arm I clutched.

"Take me out before I make an utter idiot of myself," I muttered, and Dr. Donald helped me out into the hall, and set me down near a window.

"That's enough for me," I said, faintly. "I am disgusted with myself. One can't learn from the outside. One must begin at the beginning. I am so sorry, but truly it has taught me a lesson. And yet," I added, looking up pleadingly at him, "I think I *could* have behaved myself if I had been needed in any way."

"Of course you could," he returned, encouragingly. "You needn't tell me that."

But all the same I abandoned my attempt to be a "poet before I'd been to school," and began with shame to take a lower place, confining my efforts to the help and amusement of the patients. I soon found that here, too, one could do very little from the outside, try as one would. And I did try my best. But my first charitable venture proved an entire failure.

"Oh, Miss Langdon," said the nurse, meeting me in the ward one morning. "Here is a case for you." She pointed to a shock-headed man with wild eyes, sitting up in a bed near the farthest wall. "No—not the man himself, I'm afraid he'll never be good for much again, but he's got a wife and children in urgent need of support."

I saw the wife, a pretty, weak-looking little creature. Giving her money was easy, and finding her work was hard, but I managed it at last, and their gratitude made me feel ashamed to be well and living in luxury myself.

Every time I passed his bed the man used to stop me to whisper the most intimate details about her and the children, and himself and his disease—which I knew the doctors considered incurable.

At Christmas time he begged to go

home. "But they won't leave me go unless you ask, miss," he said. "It seems it is agin' the rules for a patient under treatment to get leave of absence."

Not let a poor man go home to spend Christmas with his family? I was indignant, and resolved to make certain representations to Dr. Donald.

"They had me up in the operatin'-room yesterday," the man went on, "but they brought me down again without touchin' me. They can't do nothin' for me, I guess. You ask them, miss, will you?"

The rose and flame colored feathers in my hat fairly quivered with suppressed sympathy as I tripped off in search of Dr. Donald.

"We can't do anything for him," he said, "but keep him from suffering too much till he dies. I don't know how soon that will be. The Visiting wants him to go to the Island, but I'm rather in favor of keeping him. He's an interesting case."

"You're a lot of cold-blooded cannibals!" said I. "He wants to go home for Christmas. Can't he? I mean, can't he go, and come back?"

"He'll be wretchedly uncomfortable most likely! Besides, it's against the rules."

"Bother the rules! Who do I go to? Please, dear Dr. Donald, don't be bad to me."

So after some trouble and infinite unwinding of red tape it was arranged, and he went off in triumph, promising to return at once. From a traveling peddler who visited the wards he had bought some cheap toys for his children, and my heart was wrung when he exhibited a wretched little doll's perambulator, and described how delighted his little girl would be with it. I sent the youngest footman down on Christmas day with a turkey and a basketful of things, edible and otherwise. I was pleased to have added even so little to anybody's happiness, and I hoped they were having one good, easy, comfortable day together, and forgetting their hard lives. I was full of pity for them.

It was rather a shock to me, there-

fore, when I found that the man had dispatched the youngest footman—who was little more than a boy—for beer, and they had had a royal orgy which lasted till nightfall, and led to the subsequent dismissal of the footman, and the howling refusal of the man to return to the hospital when the ambulance came for him. He also declined to give up a wheeled-chair which he had been allowed, as a special favor, to take with him. Stay he would, and stay he did. He made such a fuss that the neighbors came out and abused his wife for cruelty. Alas! for my well-meant interference! She, poor soul, had not the time to take care of him—nor the inclination, I fancy, for she was a giddy little thing, or would have been if she had not lost her spirit through the dragging weight of poverty and overwork—and his suffering and his temper grew steadily worse. At the end of a year I had to beg the authorities to be merciful, and take him back to die; but in the meantime another child had been born, which was called after me, and for whose welfare Aunt Anne declared I ought to hold myself responsible for the rest of my life.

I suppose I should have accepted this burden meekly as a penalty for my meddling, but fortunately a kindly, well-to-do old plumber took a fancy to the widow and her small family. They vanished into the chaste seclusion of Williamsburg, and I saw them no more.

This incident discouraged me from further interference with the workings of human fate. Occupation I still wanted, but I felt the futility of such attempts as I had already made, and I gradually ceased to go to the hospital. It struck me as rather humorous that no one should miss me except my little curly-haired doctor. I had started out with such different intentions. I thought of Aunt Anne's biting remarks about medical students, but consoled myself with the excuse offered for the unnecessary baby: "He was such a little one." After all, *perhaps* a few of the people missed me. I hoped they might, a little, sometimes.

So there I was again thrown back

upon myself and society, with always more time than I knew what to do with. I read a great deal; principally novels and memoirs; character interested me more than the dry history of events. I persuaded my aunt to let me keep house for her, but in an establishment full of old family servants, who had for many years run in their appointed grooves like well-oiled machines, there was little to do.

My grandfather had given me a horse, and, to please him, I exercised it every day; but I had little love of riding for its own sake, and even disliked it when I had to go alone with the groom. I had few intimate friends, for I was not at my ease with young women. I hated fancy work, sewing classes, women's lunches and afternoon teas. I was only amused when I was in mischief, and sometimes fancied that even mischief had lost some of its savor—or was I getting old and staid?

Twice lately I had gone to bed instead of going to a ball. This would never do! I began to look carefully for gray hairs.

I mustn't be old, I wouldn't be old till I had seen more and done more—oh, yes, and suffered more if need be. In the meantime, what was one to do but just look eagerly from day to day for one's chance of happiness.

I once overheard a woman, a very handsome, reckless woman with several pasts, say of me: "That girl's heart is just crying out for something it can respect." It seemed to me a curious saying. Of the people one met ordinarily, one must not expect too much, perhaps, but one respected *something* about every one, and one bent the knee to the great beliefs, and hopes, and passions of the world. I think she meant: "That girl's nature is just spoiling for the lack of some special interest or occupation," and that I knew myself.

V.

"Aunty," said I, one day, leaning back in my chair before the drawing-room fire, "I've always said that I

meant to go out till I was sixty-two, and perhaps longer, if I continued to enjoy myself, but somehow I don't feel enthusiastic about this particular ball to-night. Of course, if I were told that I couldn't go, I should be awfully disappointed, but as it is, I'm a little faint-hearted. Perhaps I am tired."

"No matter how tired you are, I wish you would not adopt that barroom attitude," remarked Aunt Anne, looking up from her book.

I was guiltily conscious of having one knee crossed over the other. I uncrossed them without demanding explanations, and went on addressing my elder aunt, who sat opposite to me, placidly knitting.

"All the women I know are worried to death about their costumes," I continued, "and half the men swear they won't go. That's the trouble with a fancy ball. Men always make such a fuss about their dressing."

"I have yet to find a matter touching their *vanity* about which men do not make a fuss," said Aunt Anne, but this time without looking up. She pronounced the word "men" as most people pronounce the word "snake."

"Well, they would naturally be particular not to make guys of themselves," I returned. "You couldn't expect—"

"I don't expect anything of them," interrupted Aunt Anne, "except to smoke in your face in public places."

"Well, they won't do that in the ballroom, at any rate," said I, pacifically. "I hear Mrs. Mallon has taken a whole floor at the Waldorf."

"I think the practice of hiring rooms in a hotel for the purpose of entertaining your friends a very vulgar one," observed my aunt. "You should never invite a larger number of people than your house will accommodate, or your servants can wait upon."

"That was true enough, Anne, in the days when we first had friends to entertain," said Aunt Susan, dryly, "but 'returning obligations,' as they call it now, seems to be quite a different thing."

"I don't see what Mrs. Mallon could

have done," I interposed. "Her house is sold; she spent last winter in Washington, and now she's just on the point of sailing for England. If she wanted to give a farewell ball to all the people she knew, she had to hire rooms somewhere."

"The whole thing is vulgar and ostentatious——" began Aunt Anne.

"I declare I am beginning to feel quite in the spirit of it," I interrupted, laughing. "Wait till you see me all trigged out in orange and silver, with a high comb! and flaming pomegranate flowers! and a mantilla! Then you will see vulgar ostentation personified! It's all your fault, too, for if you hadn't given me that beautiful pair of orange silk stockings long ago, I should never have got the dress, and if I hadn't got the dress, how could I have had it cut over into a Spanish costume for this lamentable occasion? And I'll tell you something more to shock you, little Aunt Anne," I added, patting her shoulder, as I passed her on my way out of the room. "If they ask me to dance for them, all alone by myself, you know, very conspicuously, I'll do it."

"I'm not in the least shocked, my dear," returned Aunt Anne, as I reached the door, "and I should think somersaults would attract more attention."

This was the kind of speech I hated, because it represented me to myself in a ludicrous light. I shut the door with decision.

I was a little worried about Mrs. Mallon's fancy ball. I had promised to go to supper with a man who did not interest me much, but whom my aunts counted among the few worthy to offer me the humble hand of a husband. (Not that they advocated matrimony, but they knew I did, and they were obliged to admit to themselves that he would be what was called "suitable.") Later, a most charming, long-legged, languid detrimental, whom I much affected, had asked me, and I hadn't been able to say "no"—at least, not decidedly. There are a good many of us in this world cursed with the curse of "Bunch," the youngest kitten in the heart-stirring tale of "Old Mammy

Catchum," where those immortal words describe her:

"Puss said at once that *she* would not go, but Bunch, who was rather weak,
And never could say decidedly No, agreed,
though she felt like a sneak."

I had not exactly agreed to "chuck Williams," as the voice of the tempter earnestly advised, but I had promised to provide him with another woman to talk to while I devoted my whole attention to my long-legged friend, and I felt like a sneak about Williams, who, in a rebellious, furtive way was really fond of me.

That was always the trouble with my amusements. Have them I would, but I never could enjoy them with entire satisfaction if I had to see anybody else made angry, and I knew Mr. Williams would be angry.

My aunts came to my room to see me dressed. Ellen, whose dear old rough fingers were scratching over the satin as she helped me, opined that my costume wasn't "badly becoming." This was high praise, but she qualified it by adding that it made me look "someways bold." I hoped she was right, but I gave my eyes an extra touch of black at the corners to make them bolder, and then by no means ill pleased with myself, I descended, rustling and sparkling, to the library, where my grandfather always sat of an evening with a paper on his knees and his eyes tight shut; an attitude which we well knew denoted meditation, and was not to be lightly interrupted.

"Tut, tut, tut!" he exclaimed, putting down his paper, and peering at me over his eyeglasses. "Whom have we here? Let us look at you! Humph! ridiculous heels! Well, I don't see but what you are a very fine bird in your fine feathers. Turn round."

I pirouetted slowly before him. There was an old-fashioned long mirror between the long windows which led into the conservatory, and as I caught a glimpse of my gaudy orange-colored figure in the dignified, somber old room with its shaded lamps, huge, carved table, high book-

cases and grave portraits, I felt that I presented an appearance which would have been insolent if it had not also seemed insignificant.

"Conduct yourself with as much decorum as the character allows, my dear," he said. "Who takes charge of you? I hardly suppose your aunts are going."

"Mrs. Janeway," I answered. "I meet her in the dressing-room. Good-night."

As I went on downstairs, some slight noise made me look upward, and there, leaning over the banisters of the highest hall, were a row of faces watching me. I remembered how I had watched merry-makers from that point of vantage when I was a little girl, twenty years ago.

Good-night, housemaids, laundresses, kitchenmaids! I dare say I shan't have half as nice a time as you will, sound asleep, and I haven't even a baldheaded gentleman to escort me to the ball!

The press of carriages was already so great that Ellen and I were a good twenty minutes in getting to the awning-covered entrance. Eager faces—blue-white under the electric light—peered over the shoulders of stalwart policemen, as each new arrival hurried across the strip of carpet.

Mrs. Janeway and her daughter were waiting for me, and from the clamor which broke out from the ballroom as we approached it, I imagined the first costume quadrille to be over, and the comments of the onlookers to have begun. Mrs. Mallon, the smallest, the blackest and most starry Night that ever arose upon a pleasure-loving world, received us, meekly assisted by Mr. Mallon, dressed as the Devil, very tall and of an exceeding scarlet, his tail curled round his left arm to keep it from being torn off in the crush. A few groups loitered in the background. Three cardinals of assorted sizes compared shoes. Two powdered ladies with prodigious hoops were exchanging politenesses with an ass-cared jester, whose motley satin raiment jingled with bells. A stolid Indian walked slowly across the floor in company with a gray-coated

Puritan. From the white and gold walls sprang innumerable branches of wax candles, which shed a very soft, brilliant light over everything. Through the wide doorway one could see into the ballroom, where a kaleidoscope of many-colored figures waved and circled under the great crystal chandelier.

As we passed our hostess I became aware that a brown-frocked priest had joined Mrs. Janeway. He was not tall, but the breadth of his shoulders was noticeable even under his disguising garment. He had a round head; beautiful, clear, yellow-brown eyes, a large mouth, with the lower lip slightly protruded, and a square, obstinate chin. He looked at me, and said something to Mrs. Janeway, who introduced him at once—Mr. Greville. I just managed to catch his name, but before I had a chance to say more than a few words in reply to his first remark, a glittering white and gold Toreador swooped down upon us, and insisted upon my making a dramatic entry on his arm. Our costumes were freely commented upon as we paused under the musicians' gallery, and my gratified ears collected some scraps of personal flattery before we plunged into the crowd.

"What *has* Nina done to her eyes? They look enormous." "It's paint, my dear, and of course it's becoming." "The costume is stunning, but she ought to be more rouged." "The color makes her white." "She is rather a well-made little thing, but I don't call her handsome." "Handsome! No. Just black hair and a red mouth." Then broken sentences about other people. "My dear, do you know? Mrs. March has sworn she will never speak to Mrs. September again— They say she kept Myer so long making her up that Mrs. March was late for her quadrille." "Well, my dear, I heard it wasn't true. The reason she was late—"

We whirled in among other whirling couples, and I never heard the reason.

I suppose it was a good ball. I know it was a brilliant one, but halfway through the evening I got swept out of the whirlpool in the middle of the room, and stranded with a very dull derelict in

a corner until supper time. As the march began my long-legged friend hurriedly approached me.

"I'll join you as soon as I've deposited an old lady in Turkish trousers at the table of honor. Mrs. Mallon asked me, and I couldn't refuse. She is the dowager duchess of something or other. Where shall I find you?"

I told him where I knew Mr. Williams had reserved a table, and he hurried away. So did my poor companion, who was doubtless as tired of me as I of him, but whose departure was accelerated by the furious beckoning of a home-going wife. I was left alone, and I gave a sigh of relief and a little yawn, for making conversation had been uphill work. The ballroom was almost empty, except for a few scattered groups, and a cluster of men near the door. The band was still playing away bravely. Was it possible that Mr. Williams had deserted me? I shrugged my shoulders, put a hand on each hip (the attitude of a washerwoman, according to Aunt Anne), and stretching out my feet, surveyed the silver embroidery on the toes of my slippers. How well it is to have two strings to one's bow! If Williams did not choose to make his appearance, so much the worse for Williams!

The brown-frocked priest slid into the chair at my side before I had time to change my position. I looked up at him, smiling.

"I have on my very best shoes," I volunteered, "and I can't help admiring them."

"They are admirable," said the priest. "Will you let me take you to supper?"

"I had promised to go with Mr. Williams," I began, "but——"

He stood up, and offered me his arm.

"A laggard has no rights," he said, "and the church offers you all the consolation in her power, my daughter."

"And plenary indulgence for a broken vow—or two?"

"For all past ones a pardon, and for all those to come a warning."

"Well, I suppose it is not counted a sin to break a promise to an infidel, and Mr. Williams is a Turk to-night, with a

turban as large as a rolled-up bolster, and a whole armory of jeweled weapons in his sash. It is all right to break a promise to him, but there was another——"

"He be—excommunicated," said the priest, hastily. "I fear you keep parlous company, daughter. An infidel and a heretic—— Shocking!"

"So it is," said I, gayly, jumping up, and slipping my hand under his brown sleeve. "And I'll go and confess all their faults to you."

We crossed the ballroom, and threaded our way through the clamor and confusion of the supper-room, in and out among the tables, stopping here and there to exchange a nod or a few words with some half-disguised acquaintance. The place reserved for Mr. Williams was now occupied by a small party of fools and follies. Of the excellent Turk himself there was no sign, but in the distance I observed my tall friend searching for me wildly. I motioned, but he did not look my way.

"Here," said the priest, suddenly stopping, and I saw a dimly lighted little alcove under the stairs in the hall, and in it a table set for two people.

We sat down, and I pulled off my gloves, and unfolded my napkin.

"Hungry?" said he, amused at my haste.

"Exhausted," said I. "The first part of the evening was dull, and nothing exhausts one as soon as dullness."

"I hope supper won't be dull," said he, smiling.

"I hope it will come soon," returned I, greedily.

"In the meantime, you might amuse me by confessing the faults of your friends."

"I think I'd amuse myself more if I confessed my own," I returned, "but I can't remember them just now. Wait till I've had something to eat."

A waiter slid a hot plate in front of me, and offered me a steaming dish. Mr. Greville filled my glass with champagne. I hated champagne, having been brought up by my grandfather with nice old-gentlemanly tastes in claret, Madeira and port, but I took it, hoping

it might put me in better spirits. I can't say I noticed much difference in my spirits, but I certainly began to feel less tired.

"I'll tell you my faults now," I said; "I'm half hearted, half willed, half sincere; nearly always kind, and hardly ever unreasonable. I try to be just—"

"What was it Johnson said about the dog walking on its hind legs?" interjected Mr. Greville. "It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all."

"I'll confess no more after that," said I, amused, but rather piqued. "It's your turn now, by all laws of justice—except a priest's, perhaps—and what Johnson said was apropos of a woman preaching."

"So it was," assented Mr. Greville, "and I don't know what made me think of it. You have a great many faults, haven't you? I have only one. I am obstinate. When I want a thing I never give up till I have it."

"And then you give it up, I suppose?"

"Never; because I know very well what its value is to me before I let myself want it."

"Oh," said I, feeling vaguely uncomfortable. "You must be rather a trying sort of person to live with."

"The sweetest tempered man in the world," he replied, laughing. "That is the reason they are going to send me as special correspondent to Cuba, if you Americans go to war with Spain."

"We Americans?" I echoed. "I thought you were an American—I don't know why, for you speak with the English accent. I think I imagined you had been born here and educated in England."

"My father is an Englishman, and my mother an American," he answered. "I live on the other side, but I have been here often. It is astonishing that we have not met before."

And then we began to talk of people we knew and places we wanted to know, and of life and what we wanted from it, and of men and women, and what they might be and were not to each other.

The hall was almost deserted; our

attentive waiter had long ago supplied us with coffee, which stood unnoticed at our elbows, and we were just plunging into a new subject when a loudly laughing and talking crowd burst out of the supper-room and surrounded us.

"Here she is!" "Here they are!" "We want you to dance, Nina." "Deputation from headquarters, Miss Langdon." "In the little yellow room." "You and Miss Esler." "You wouldn't go into the quadrilles, and now you can't refuse Mrs. Mallon." "Come, they've got the musicians there."

I had no wish to refuse, for I loved to dance, and was also consumed with the desire to show my new friend how very well I did it. I looked back to see whether he were following as they hurried me along.

Miss Esler was waiting in the yellow room; somebody had provided two pair of castanets, and in a few moments her primrose-colored figure and my orange one were swaying and swinging and stamping in time to the music of the cachucha. We were used to dancing together, and we danced exceedingly well, if I say it who shouldn't, but tonight we were both excited to the point where—as I heard a man describe it—we did better than we knew how. The passion of rhymed motion was in our feet—our bodies seemed to be blown to and fro like flames in the wind. Furious applause broke out when we stopped.

As the people gradually melted away I found Mr. Williams, flushed and fiery-eyed, beside me.

"Couldn't find you for supper," he muttered. "You mustn't play tricks with me, for I won't stand it. Where were you? Hid in some corner, I'll swear. Who did you throw me over for?"

I had been breathless from the dance before, but I was breathless from astonishment now. This from Williams! Williams, who was, if anything, over-courteous and pompous in manner!

"You know very well how I feel about you, and you trample upon me," he added, violently; "upon me and my affection for you."

This was even more remarkable, for I did not think he would have acknowledged such feelings to himself, much less to me.

"I am very sorry, Mr. Williams," I said, gently. "I waited for you in the ballroom until every one else had gone. I think an apology is due to me. If some one had not taken pity upon my forlorn condition, I might have gone supperless."

"No doubt you were glad enough of the chance to go with some one else," cried my enraged Turk, striding up and down before me.

I began to think he was not very steady on his feet, and to notice that his voice was much louder than usual.

"Where were you at supper?" I asked, looking at him attentively.

"Never mind, as long as I was not with you! And I missed the dance, too. Everything is against me to-night. Make it up to me," he said, throwing himself on the sofa beside me. "What are women for but to make things pleasant for men? Be good to me." And he put his hand on my sleeve.

Wine in, truth out! So that was the real Williams—this person of Turkish habiliments and ideas, and not the dignified, modest, respectable, heavy gentleman I was accustomed to meet.

I moved away from him to the farthest corner of the sofa.

"I do not like to be touched," I said, shaking off his hand.

"You don't want me to come near you, that's very plain," he exclaimed, moving after me.

"Then keep your distance," I cried, angrily, trying to rise; but he caught at my dress and detained me.

"Dance for me, dance for me! I only saw the end of it. You threw me over once this evening, you owe me something for that."

"Don't be absurd. There is no music—I am tired—Let me go at once, Mr. Williams. At once—do you hear? You are out of your mind."

"You *shall* dance," he declared, getting up, and half dragging me, by his hold on my skirts, across the floor after him. "Here. Put your dear little foot

in my hand, and I'll mount you on this table."

He had been hard enough to manage on the sofa in full view of the ballroom, but now that we were out of sight of people I was afraid, not of him, but of the scene he might expose me to. I wrenched my dress out of his hand, and pushed him away from me.

"Doesn't it mortify you at all," I said, trying to make the words bite into his dull mind, "that I should see you and remember you in this condition?"

"Condition. You're responsible for the condition. My affection—"

"Let me pass, please; I see it is useless to talk to you."

Mr. Williams did not answer. With outspread arms and a fixed, roguish smile, he drove me back into the corner where the table stood, but over his shoulder I caught sight of a brown figure, and Mr. Greville, looking as unpriestly as any man could, interposed none too gently between us.

"You seem to be annoying this lady," he said.

"What business is it of yours?" inquired the other, fiercely.

"Come, my good fellow, you don't want to make a row here, do you? Let me take Miss Langdon to the ballroom, and I'll come back, and settle accounts with you later."

"I'll take her myself," said Mr. Williams, with dignity.

"That is entirely as she pleases," returned the priest.

I looked up at him gratefully. "Perhaps you will both walk to the door with me," I said, anxious to avoid further trouble.

"Not I," muttered Mr. Williams, with a sudden change of heart. "I have had enough of her and her deceitful ways." As he spoke he turned so abruptly that he almost ran against me. Mr. Greville's arm pushed him aside with enough force to send him staggering to the wall, and the next thing I knew I was in the ballroom, with the kaleidoscope of colored figures mistily waving and circling before my eyes under the great crystal chandelier.

"Your friend the Turk will be awfully

ashamed to-morrow morning," Mr. Greville was saying. "Was he very troublesome?"

"He wanted to make me dance again for him," said I, suppressing the table part of it, as turning comedy into farce.

"Upon my word, I don't blame him so much, then."

"Did you see me? Did you like the way I danced? I am so glad."

"I did see you. I make you my respectful compliments. I never saw anything prettier. I shouldn't have left you for a minute, only I did not want you to have too much of me—at first."

"At first?"

"Why, you didn't suppose I meant never to see you again, did you?"

Not having supposed anything of the kind, I said, with gentle interrogation: "You are not going away, then?"

"Not unless war is declared."

"Will you come and see me, Mr. Greville?"

"With the very greatest pleasure, Miss Langdon, now that I've made you ask me."

"Oh, I meant to ask you," said I, laughing.

"And I meant you should—of your clemency," said he.

And so we parted.

"Ellen," said I, as that worthy woman bundled into the cab after me, "what did you think of the ball?"

"Oh, but it was the fine affair, Miss Nina, and food served to us maids in the dressing-room as good as you could ask. It's a shame for some of them ladies that expects a woman to sit up all night, and never even a cup of coffee to keep the cold out, and it's freezin', it is, in them upstairs rooms sometimes! But it was just what I call 'well done' to-night, and some of the costumes were beautiful. And the jewels! They were something wonderful. I wisht you had a rich husband to give you all them things."

"I wish I had a kind one, who would be glad when I laughed and sorry when I cried, and pleased when I was good, and lenient when I was bad."

"Well, my dear," said Ellen, "you'll

never get that kind this side of heaven. Is anything the matter, miss?"

Our progress from the door had been slow, and the carriage had now stopped at the corner of the street to let a rampant hansom horse turn round.

A tall young man with fair hair and a handsome, fierce face had just alighted, and was remonstrating with a policeman under the electric light.

"I tell you I live down there," I heard him say. "Am I to be kept out of my bed all night because a fool with a full pocket chooses to give a ball? It's an outrage on the rights of every citizen in New York to close this street to the general public. There's my card. You see the number? Then don't make an idiot of yourself, my good man."

He looked up suddenly, and I laughed and drew in my head.

"Nothing is the matter, Ellen, except that somebody has been interfering with the rights of a freeborn American citizen in a way he won't brook for an instant."

I settled myself back in my corner, and the carriage rolled on uptown.

VI.

"Aunt," I said, the next morning, "I've done what you exceedingly dislike and asked a man of whom I know nothing to come and see me. His name is Greville, and Mrs. Janeway introduced him to me."

"Oh, I knew his mother very well," returned Aunt Susan. "She was a Miss Farrington, and married Col. Greville. You remember him, Anne, he was out here long ago when the Guards were sent to Canada. His grandfather—" here my aunts plunged into genealogy, and I permitted my thoughts to wander.

I told myself that I was not at all sure I was going to like Mr. Greville on nearer acquaintance. But I should have been distinctly disappointed if he had not shown himself eager to see me again; so, coming in late one afternoon, it pleased me to find his card and the photograph of a picture we had discussed the night of the ball.

I was sorry I had not been at home, and I walked up the staircase slowly, looking at the picture, a Spanish dancer, whom he pretended, very flatteringly, that I had resembled, and wondering how soon he would be likely to try again if I let him alone. At the same time I began to compose a note which should bring him at once if he wanted an excuse to come—I wrote very nice notes—and apparently he was quite ready to avail himself of the implied invitation, for he returned the next day at exactly the hour I had mentioned, and stayed as late as was advisable under the circumstances.

After that he came often, and gradually drifted into the habit of presenting himself two or three times a week on some pretext or other; while I, although I had settled in my own mind that he was not at all the sort of man one was likely to fall in love with, found myself uneasy and dissatisfied if he did not come exactly when I expected him. He nearly always did, for he had a fine disregard for himself or what anybody thought of him, and, apparently, a single desire—to be with me. And so he was with me whenever it was possible. His simple directness stood upon no small personal dignity, though he was too much of a man of the world to make me unduly conspicuous in any way, and I always felt at ease with him, secure in the conviction that no matter what happened one could trust him to say and do the right thing. Sometimes, as I looked about at the married women of my acquaintance, wincing under the unconscious brutalities of kind, dull men, I wondered whether this quality—tact—were not in itself enough to found a life's companionship upon.

I never doubted that he cared for me. From the first time we met he had taken no pains to disguise his interest, and the fact that it was a sudden interest did not trouble me at all. Anybody who had ever liked me spontaneously had liked me suddenly. (I did not count those whose liking had to be fostered.) People were very apt to take to me at once if they took to me at all. To be fond in haste—if they were fond

at all—and repentant at leisure. But I did not want him to be repentant. No matter how variable my feelings were, I did not want his to change in any way. And somehow I began to find I was not so variable, after all. When I had settled in my mind that he was *not* the sort of man one fell in love with, I had been—well—somewhat hasty. He was a charming companion. His tact was unfailing, his temper never ruffled, he was the least prejudiced and most generous-minded of men. What more did I want? I asked myself as the weeks went by.

I was not *exactly* in love with him, even now, of course, but I knew it would hurt me not a little to find him out of love with me. I was not sure I wanted him, but I was beginning to think I could not get on without him. And the more I thought of that, the less sure I began to be of him.

Suppose he were to find, some day, that he was able, if not willing, to get on without me? Absurd! I knew better. And yet—does one ever know? And in the meantime he came as often as he could, he stayed as long as I would let him, he brought me books, he sent me flowers, he discussed pedigrees with my aunts and politics with my grandfather, and told me in every language under the sun but words, that he adored me.

How long the "waits" are in real life, and how hurried the action, when it comes to action! For many days we hovered upon the brink of explanation, and then suddenly one afternoon, when we had been discussing something quite different, he broke out.

"You're the prettiest woman in the world," he said, "and the sweetest. I'd have you if I were to die for it—and I *will*, for you do love me a little, don't you?"

Now I knew that I was only pretty at times, and not so very pretty then, so the vehement exaggeration of his speech was sweet to me. Moreover, having been in an uncertain state of mind myself, his positiveness was somehow comforting—a staff to lean upon. I was glad of his assurance.

"My feeling seems to take a secondary place, according to you," I said, in a very small voice.

"Why, so it does, dear, and so, I'm afraid, it always will, beside my love for you," he answered, sighing. "I know I have got to be sure enough for both. But you like me a little! I suppose I ought not to have spoken now. I am pledged to go to Cuba if there is war. Having accepted the appointment conditionally I couldn't very well throw it up now that the thing is imminent, and although a correspondent need not of necessity run into danger, your people would probably forbid an engagement between us until after I had returned with whole bones, and the power of making settlements."

"This is a matter," said I, "in which my people will not be consulted until after I have decided what to do—and not then, if I think they are likely to disagree with me! It's very simple. If you go to Cuba, I'll go, too, for I just can't get on without you, and every correspondent *ought* to have a nurse to look after him. But don't let us think of it to-day—perhaps there won't be any war—to-day I only want to think how glad I am."

"And you are glad?"

"The gladdest possible."

"How much is that, I wonder, my dear?" he said. "Do you think I don't understand you? Better than you do yourself, I dare say. You are glad that I should love you, and you realize that one should think twice before one puts so much affection out of one's life—but the 'gladdest possible'—you are not that yet. No matter. I'll make you so in time."

I was guiltily conscious that his summing up of the situation was not altogether untrue. I had reasoned more than I had felt, and yet, was it not instinct which told me that he could be more to me than any other man in the world? This at least I could say. I believed it, and I said it "with all my heart," eager to give as I received.

"Oh, Delilah," he sighed, catching me in his arms, "you women, who persuade yourselves of the genuineness of

your own emotions, can persuade a man of anything. Is it 'all your heart' to-day? I think it was only half, yesterday. But let me tell you, you're in for it now! If you say 'yes,' you cannot go back. I'm not going to be played with."

"That's what I like. I wouldn't give a fig for a man who would let me play with him. That's one reason I—I mean—I have played—played with quite a good many, you know, and I know the real thing."

He laughed. "So I supposed, and you will, very probably, play with a great many more. But don't forget that the 'real thing' belongs to me, sweetheart. I'm your man, and I love you very honestly and fiercely."

"Oh, but that's the only way worth having," I said, looking up at him. "I'd rather die than not have it."

"You'll have it till you die, I promise you, if you'll have me," he answered, half smiling. "I am just stark, staring mad about you. And now tell me, what shall I say to your grandfather, and when shall I say it?"

"Not till I give you leave. Let us keep it to ourselves for a little while, and see what happens. If only things might be arranged for peace—oh, dear me, what pleasant days we might have now, you and I; but it's good to be alive and together, and full of all sorts of delicious excitements—only perhaps you're not excited? I am just bubbling over with it."

"Do I look calm? It only shows how appearances deceive, for if you were to touch me again with your smallest finger—I wouldn't answer for the consequences."

"And I couldn't, I suppose. I declare if I did not hear grandpapa tripping upstairs in the airy way which puts even me to shame, I'd try experiments with all my fingers."

"Let me speak to him. I feel like a sneak."

"To-morrow, to-morrow. I want it all to myself to-night."

"My sweet——" The door opened, and grandpapa's entrance cut the word in two.

"It's very late for you to be out in the street alone, sir," said I, imitating his usual way of speaking to me. "I am astonished my aunts permitted it. All old gentlemen should be in the house before dark. And now I suppose you will be wanting to spoil your digestion with tea. Tut, tut, tut! A bad habit—a pernicious habit."

"You talk so fast, my dear, I can't distinguish a word," returned grandpapa. "Glad to see you, Mr. Greville. Can you understand her?"

"It is difficult, of course, Mr. Langdon, yet I flatter myself that, with practice——"

"You have young ears; perhaps that helps, but she runs her words so together——" grandpapa fluttered his fingers to show how fast my words ran. "Well," he went on, sitting down and smoothing a knee with either hand, "this is a very sad business. I'm afraid we are in for it now. To all intents and purposes war has begun."

VII.

It seems curious now to look back upon a time when we really argued the probability of New York's being bombarded by the Spanish battleships, but we certainly did. The very vagueness of the danger made it more ubiquitous. Almost anything seemed possible. What with the strengthening of defenses, the moving of troops, the toings and froings of the war vessels, our minds were kept in a constant state of excitement. Men we knew were enlisting; the most unlikely women were taking courses in first aid to the injured, or clamoring to become hospital nurses. The navy was as yet bearing off all honors, the land force was chafing under inaction, but—the correspondents were off! My man was gone.

I lived through the first part of the time before his going as one lives through some extraordinary phase of a dream—outwardly calm under the most trying circumstances, and inwardly aghast at one's own insensibility.

"You haven't half appreciated him—you haven't given him a quarter of the affection he lavishes upon you—you don't know how you will feel when he has gone—you will only begin to find out when it is too late."

These sentences kept passing and re-passing through my mind when I lay down at night, and then in the morning, when the ordinary routine of everyday life began again, they seemed an exaggeration of feeling. And how could I trust my feelings? What reason had I to trust them? This man had only just come into my life—was it possible that I could not spare him out of it for even a few months? But suppose it should be more—suppose he should never come back? I found I shrank altogether from the facing of that thought. I could not endure it.

I had not told, nor allowed him to tell, of our engagement. I knew that my family would advise and entreat—even if they did not insist—that nothing should be made public until Mr. Greville's return, and if the thing were to be secret, why should it not be secret between him and me? I wanted no discussion and no comment for the present. For the affair was my own; my private and particular business, and if I were going to be unhappy about it, I preferred being unhappy alone. And I found myself more and more inclined toward this condition. At first I had been anxious to appear in good spirits, and I used to invent all sorts of ridiculous stories about accompanying him, in various disguises, through the Cuban jungle (which I represented as picturesquely hung with snakes and bananas), until we had discovered the enemy, and saved the whole army. "And then," I added, gayly, "the President would compliment you, and the Queen, not to be behindhand, would knight you, and you, if you had a vestige of modesty left, would say, 'Noble sir, and worthy madam, I owe it all to this faithful and devoted woman, who has been my prop and mainstay.'"

But as the days went on I was not a conspicuous success as a prop and mainstay. There was no evil idea of the fu-

ture with which my imagination did not supply me. I saw him wounded by some stray shot, or horribly ill of fever, and I, not only unable to go to him, but having even to conceal the fact that his danger made any difference to me. I saw worse things than this—things which I would not acknowledge as possibilities, but which ended in my contemplating a lonely and loveless old age for myself, and sent me down to the breakfast table with black shadows under my eyes, and an abstracted manner which greatly irritated Aunt Anne.

"If you don't hear what I say, my dear, I can repeat, but don't take the pains to answer what I have *not* said, because that is exasperating."

Little did I care what was said to me! My mind was always busy with the future, and look which way I would, I was afraid. Afraid I did not care enough—afraid I cared too much! Afraid I had been too cold yesterday, or too reckless in making up for it to-day. Afraid to trust the feeling that urged me to a certain mad, half-formed plan. Afraid that if I did *not* trust it I should repent it all my life. Afraid, above all and everything else, of the pain of having my lover leave me.

And so I hesitated and hoped, and doubted and despaired, and clung with one hand to love and all it meant and might mean to me, and with the other to the very respectable, reasonable, right-minded rules and regulations with which I had been brought up. I knew that a woman who makes a secret marriage is a fool, but I found my heart pushing me nearer and nearer to the decision that just such a fool I meant to be. If he must go, I would put myself in the position where, if it were necessary, I might follow.

And so I told him. It was one afternoon a day or two before he went, when, as was usual with him, he had returned a second and third time from the door, to say another and another last word.

"You hate to leave me, don't you?" I said, leaning against his arm.

He looked down at me, troubled and frowning. "I begrudge every second

that I have to spend away from you now," he said. "You know it."

"Yes, I know it, because I begrudge them, too. Dear, I'm frightened—terribly frightened at the future. I don't know how I can bear these months that are coming, but I've made up my mind that I will not bear them here unless I have the right—to—go to you if you need me."

"Would you do that?" he cried. "Would you? Do you care enough? Oh, if I could only let you, what an unspeakable comfort it would be! But I can't— You don't understand how hard you are making it for me—but I can't—"

"And you don't care how hard you are making it for me."

"Nina!"

"I won't promise to be good unless—"

"Then you'll be beaten as soon as I get home."

"That's very comforting, of course. But suppose you—oh, I can't say it. I can't think it. I can't bear it."

"You dear goose. I'm not going into danger."

"You're always in danger, to my mind, when I'm not with you."

"Not in half so much danger as when you are with me, believe me."

"Am I dangerous now?"

"Very."

"Do you like me better than usual?"

"Don't talk nonsense."

"Well, you need not to be rough with me. No—never mind, I really like it. I'm glad you are going to marry me to-morrow."

No answer.

"Then I am a forward minx, and a shameless hussy—"

"Sweet of my heart, don't tempt me."

Marriage was a very simple matter. "Easy to do, my dear, and hard to divide," the snuffy old Lutheran clergyman said to me, as he dismissed us with his well-bought blessing. It had been so astonishingly easy that I hardly felt as if it could have been properly done.

"Am I really a respectable married

person?" I inquired of my husband, as we walked down the steps of the dingy little red-brick house.

"We have neglected none of the legal forms of marriage," he answered, laughing. "They don't seem to be very complicated in this town, but as for the respectability, I'm afraid I don't care much about that. Just *you* are enough for me. I should love you even if you weren't a 'respectable married person'—no matter what you did."

"Ah, that's if I did it with *you*," I observed, sapiently, being in such high spirits that I enjoyed mocking him, "but suppose I ran away with somebody else, what would you do?"

"Kill you," he said, shortly. "Why do you talk of such things to-day?"

"Why, indeed," said I, "except that being very happy and content with the lot I have chosen—that's you, you know, dear—I'm not afraid, from the shelter of your arm, to fling a pebble at fate."

VIII.

DEAR: How are you, and where are you, and what are you doing? I am hungry for news, and I get so little of it. You may be a good correspondent to your paper, but to your wife—well, the less said about that the better! However, when the letters do arrive they are all my heart could wish—and that's a good deal to say when one considers how much you have taught it to expect. I carry them off upstairs, and read them first by the window, so that I shan't miss a word—you do write so badly—and then away from the window where no saucy opposite neighbors can see if I choose to do anything foolish with the senseless piece of paper. Aunt Susan wonders what makes me so gay when I first come downstairs again (that is, of course, because I've heard from you, and know you are well), and later Aunt Anne wonders what makes me so sad (that is because, having heard from you, I want to see you *at once*—and can't). Grandpapa doesn't wonder at all, because he doesn't notice anything.

We are not going out of town till late. Somehow one seems nearer things here—though I don't know what things, except those lying extras. The wildest rumors are not too wild to be believed by some people.

Ellen is a great comfort to me. She says, "It's not to be supposed that them poor benighted foreigners has a chance against *us*." She saw an Irish regiment marching through the street the other day, and she has been puffed up with pompous pride ever since.

Speaking of pompous pride, Mr. Williams (you remember Mr. Williams as the "Terrible Turk" on the night of Mrs. Mallon's fancy ball?)—well, he is fitting out a hospital boat to send to Cuba, and he comes to consult me about it almost every day. A fine, upstanding man is Williams, and if he, like the country, were not built upon lines which suggest expansion as the years go on, he would be a great deal handsomer than he is. He has invited me to inspect his boat, and also, incidentally, to accept himself. He hated to ask me that, poor soul, because he has an uneasy feeling that he wouldn't approve of me if he knew more about me. But he could not help it, because he can't help liking me—with his teeth on edge as boys like tart apples! I don't know why I say "poor soul," for he distinctly enjoyed proposing to me—as the boy might enjoy stealing the apple while his conscience barked disapprovingly from the other side of the fence—and then, as I was obliged, with due reluctance, to refuse him, he had all his fun and none of the disagreeable after consequences. Of course, I thought of drawing myself up, and saying, "I am a wife, sir!" as Mr. Jerome K. Jerome (I wonder what his middle name is?) tells us a heroine should; but, instead, I had the happy thought of alluding, in veiled language, to his conduct on the night of the ball, and insinuating that he was too volatile in disposition—too much of a free lance in love, to settle down to sober matrimony yet a while. He pretended to be shocked at my entertaining such an opinion of him, but in reality he was delighted. I think he will come

back about the day after to-morrow to hear it again, and by the end of the week he will be convinced he's a rake, and want some one to reform him. I know just the person, but I shall have to convince *her* that he is in more urgent need of it than he looks.

Oh, my dear, what foolish things I write you to keep myself above the surface of sadness. It's a dreadful thing to be in daily, hourly anxiety about the person you like best in the world. What wouldn't I give to have you back safe and well at this minute. Some day, when the equality of the sexes is better established, men won't be able to say to women, "You must stay at home; to have you with us would increase our anxieties," because we shall be saying, "But what about *our* anxieties! You try staying at home a little, while we run into danger, and see how you like it." I've a mind to write to the President that if this war is not over in ten days, I'll go down myself with every woman who owns a man there, and we'll settle it with the Spaniards by word of mouth. It would take about ten minutes—not counting the time we spend in making ourselves presentable after landing.

I don't feel a bit the way I'm writing, you know. I write as if I were gay and light-hearted, and I feel as if all my heart (except the bit I am trying to be gay with), were somewhere off the coast of Cuba taking very poor care of itself. If you meet it, will you please take care of it for me? You don't know how I value it now that it doesn't seem to belong to me any more.

Yours always, NINA.

I don't see how Penelope stood it all those years, dear, I really don't—except that perhaps Ulysses wasn't a pleasant home companion. I don't think much of patience as a virtue! I never was patient, and never shall be till I am dead, and then I shan't be *very* patient till you come to join me wherever I may be; the place is a matter of speculation. But while we are alive it seems such a waste of time, every day we are not together. I feel as if you had been

away for months already, and I won't tell you how much I miss you, for fear of giving you exaggerated ideas of your importance as a husband. Who was it that said, "There were a great many different kinds of men, but only one kind of husband"? That's nonsense, you know. You are the wisest lover in the world, and the best, and always will be even if I do happen to be married to you. (I'm so glad I am.)

Your last letter was very good, and it showed me that you hate being away from me even more than I hate your being away. That is just as it should be, and most satisfactory; indeed, the whole way you feel about me is most satisfactory. The only thing that worries me is this—if you *really* think me the bravest, sweetest, prettiest and—well, all the things you do think me, why that is what I've got to *be* when you come back, or you will, very naturally, be disappointed, and how am I to manage it? But there! never mind. I will do my best with the not too cardinal virtues, and as for prettiness—the French say, "Give me a pair of (rather) handsome eyes, and I will do the rest," so you shall have a pretty lady to come home to also, my dear, and one who doesn't care a penny for anybody in the world but you.

Yours always, NINA.

Oh, mercy! what great things seem to have been doing in Manila, while we were blockading Cuba and looking for Cervera all across the high seas. Dewey must have been the "proud laddie, the morn," as *Punch* said the queen was the day that "Macullum More's" son married her daughter. But isn't it splendid to go steaming into an enemy's harbor, and vanquish a whole fleet, and never lose a man? Only I wish the fight had been more equal, the Spanish boats as good as ours, and I hope every one of their poor dead sailors went straight to a snug harbor above, where in a few minutes they did not care about their wounds any more. My aunts say that Dewey was once at this house when I was a little girl, and the mere fact of having seen him makes me feel as if I

had had a finger in the battle myself, although I don't in the least remember what he looked like. I wonder whether I did anything saucy to him? Aunt Susan says I once pulled the beard of Mr. Stanton, the Mr. Stanton who has his pictures on some of our bills, you know—but perhaps you wouldn't know, being half an Englishman. At all events, he was secretary of war, long ago, and he came to lunch with my grandfather one Sunday, and I pulled his beard. You couldn't wonder if you saw the length of it—I begin with the battle of Manila, and suddenly find myself at Mr. Stanton's beard! Oh, well, you like the way I write, don't you, even if it's not exactly coherent! I like the way you write so much—more and more all the time, just as I like you more and more. It surprises me that there's any man left in the world who can love a woman as you love me. Sometimes I tell myself that I am not worth it. Sometimes I think that as long as you do love me in that way I *must* be worth it. But whether I am or not it is just the best thing in the world, and of *course* I'm glad when I think of the day I married you. Did you think I should repent it? No, indeed, my dear beloved. I was giving spontaneous thanks for it in my last letter.

Please be very careful. Don't run unnecessary risks, and think of me all the time.

Yours always, NINA.

Two letters missing.

Dear, I'm so sorry. The postal service is wretchedly mismanaged. It must have lost the two last letters I wrote you. If they had been circulars they would have followed you round the globe, but being love letters—well, I hope they'll make those old fossils at the dead letter office sit up. But it cuts me to the heart to think of your waiting and watching for a word from me, and not getting it. Are the old letters nearly worn out with reading and re-reading? You shall have another as soon as the very inferior arrangements of the government allow. But be sure

to hide them carefully, for, since we neither of us approve of keeping letters, and yet cannot make up our minds to destroy each other's, I see nothing for it but to exchange them again when we meet, and each burn our own. Upon my word, we are very childish!

I see your letters to your paper constantly quoted and praised, and I feel like informing everybody whom it concerns, and as many of the rest of the world as will listen, that this man is my property.

What were you all doing to let Cervera slip into Santiago harbor, or did you want him there? I've an idea that this war is not being conducted precisely as I should have conducted it. I think I should make a very good captain (not of a ship, you know, because I am not at my best at sea), and I should take excellent care of my men, and see that they kept clean and healthy, and had the best food possible. Then when it came to leading them, why, anybody can lead when there is only one place to go, and that is forward.

When are the troops going to Cuba, by the way? I wish I were going with them; and I should be like the Saracen lady who came to England looking for her lover, and who knew nothing to help her find him but just his name, Gilbert, and, I think, the name of his town, London. Let me see! She was the mother of Thomas à Becket, wasn't she? So she *must* have found his father. All of which goes to prove that a lady may find her lover anywhere if she knows his name, and has perseverance. I want you dreadfully, and think about you so continually that Aunt Anne says my mind is like a captive balloon; one knows it must be there still because one sees the rope, but it takes more of a pull than one can generally give to bring it down to earth. I wonder if she was ever in love? and how it affected her mind?

I think I am getting sentimental, for every night when I go upstairs I turn down the light, and sit for ever so long at the window looking out, up and down the long, lamp-threaded street and over the roofs, where I can see the

stars; and the warm wind blows against my face, and the rattle and roar of the passing carriages sounds in my ears, and the "captive balloon" sails away to you. I think of all the things we'll do together when you come back, and of how much nicer, and pleasanter, and sweeter I'll be to you than any woman ever was to any man. You say that there is "nobody like me"—you tell me so in almost all your letters, my good dear—and that I have "every companionable virtue, and all the agreeable naughtinesses which go to make up the most enchanting kind of woman." Still, I have an idea that I could improve upon myself, if it were only to introduce some variety into my companionable virtues and my agreeable naughtinesses. A woman has no business to be monotonous—it must be exasperating to the man she lives with—so I will endeavor to keep you from a life of pallid dullness—and, by the way, I shall have to take to rouging directly if you don't come home; fretting for you makes me very pale, and Aunt Susan wants to take me out of town. As if it would do any good to move me farther from the source of news! But I suppose we must go soon, and, after all, Hurst is within a stone's throw of New York.

I'll tell you one person who will be sorry, and that is Ellen. She loves town just as I do, and would, I am sure, agree with the curse hurled by the Duke of Buckingham at the dog that bit him: "I wish you were married, and gone to live in the country." I'm married, and going to live in the country; but I'd like to wait in town till my man comes back to me. Good-night.

Yours always, NINA.

I really like the old, square, graystone house I live in very much. We perch high above the river, and at night I can see beyond the trees the pinkish glow that hangs over New York. If I walk across the lawn and along the path to the edge of the bluff I can see miles and miles of the city lights, and away off toward the South, the Brooklyn Bridge like a bow of diamonds suspended in

the air. But, oh, it's lonely, being out by one's self on these beautiful nights, and I see the moon through something like a sea fog, while the roses in the garden are sometimes sprinkled with drops of a very salt dew.

We live a most humdrum existence. Breakfast at nine. (Grandpapa reads prayers before breakfast, but I never get down in time, because family prayers make me feel creepy. I like to make my rather pagan petitions in the decent privacy of my own room.) After we have been refreshed, soul and body, grandpapa reads the papers, and I go out dutifully with Aunt Anne to the garden, where we pick such flowers as we think necessary for the drawing-rooms, and then, going back to the house, arrange them. We read and sew till lunch time. Aunt Anne rather prides herself upon the way she reads aloud, and I sit and stitch extraordinary and shapeless garments for the soldiers, and think of you. What a fine thing the sinking of the *Merrimac* was as you tell it! And to think that Hobson could have had four thousand men to do that deathwork! I wish I might have heard them volunteer. One thrills all over, like the strings of a violin, when one reads of things like that. Is it true about the bandmaster wanting to take his men to play the "Star Spangled Banner" while the boat was sinking? Not that I admire that *particularly*, because, brave as it was, it served no practical purpose, it was an ornamentation of courage—but it was interesting.

I wonder always if you are careful enough, if you remember what you are to me—and all this time I am leaving Aunt Anne in the midst of reading! First it's the papers—as grandpapa finishes them—and then we get maps and trace the course of events with their help. Afterward we discuss violently, almost quarrel, in fact, about the way the war is managed. Aunt Susan is generally busy with housekeeping and mysterious morning interviews with different retainers, so Aunt Anne and I have it all to ourselves, and I can tell you that if we were in Washington there would be some astonishing orders

issued! The creatures Aunt Anne calls "mere men" would see what it was to have a really competent person at the head of things. I don't care about issuing orders from Washington myself. I want to go directly to the front, and see that the soldiers are properly cared for and fed.

Where was I in my day? I think it must have been near lunch time. In the afternoon I fly off to my room, and scribble bits of my letter to you, after which I take a walk (sometimes to the post office, though I am apt to start off in quite the opposite direction), and then play croquet with Aunt Anne, who always beats me. Then Aunt Susan and I sit on the piazza and watch the sunset, and by and by it gets to be dressing time, and I go upstairs in the dusk and think how I should like to be making myself pretty to dine with you, my dear, and how instead of playing whist with grandpapa afterward we would go out together, as I often go alone, into the cool freshness of the night world, and tell each other things—such as every man and woman like us tell each other—only better and more of them.

We have few neighbors here. The Tempests own the next place, but I don't know if they have arrived yet. Ralph usually comes to see me. He has lectured me ever since I was a little girl, and that makes him fond of me. He hardly ever comes to see me in town because I haven't time to listen to him for more than half an hour at a sitting, but here he can scold me for a whole afternoon without interruption. Goodness! How he would explode in solemn dignified black pieces if he knew that I was "a wife, sir."

Yours always, NINA.

Angels and ministers of grace defend you, dear, and all poor men on Cuban soil to-night! Now that the troops are fighting we shall none of us have rest from anxiety till the next news comes, and then who can tell how many of us will ever be happy again! Ellen says to me, "Don't you think but we'll beat them, Miss Nina?" and I say, "Of course," but Heaven knows what it may

cost us. I don't seem to be brave, after all. I swing in the hammock of an evening, and frighten myself to death with my own thoughts. In the daytime I am full of courage, but at night—well, you know about the little girl who said she only said her prayers at night, because she could take care of herself in the daytime? I feel somehow as if I could take care of *you* in the daytime, but I'm afraid of the "big dark."

Life doesn't change much for me from day to day. I am almost too good to be natural, and I believe all the nice things you say of me in your letters seem in a fair way to become true. Ralph Tempest declares he never saw anybody so changed. "For the better?" said I, "or would you rather not commit yourself?" "I don't know quite how to describe it," said he. "Always be cautious about expressing an immature opinion," said I. "You can make up your mind on Sunday during the sermon (that's the time I make my most important decisions), and let me know next Monday at eight o'clock." I am going to dine at the Tempests to meet a new friend of Ralph's—a maker of books. He has just done a novel, which the critics appear to be crazy about. His name is Donaldson, Paul Donaldson, and he is represented to me as a most unusual young man, good-looking and indifferent to women. I dare say both accusations are false. When I was mischievously inclined it would have amused me to see for myself; as it is—as it is, come home, and play with me yourself, dear.

Indeed I say "yes" to all the questions you ask me. I do love you in all those ways and several more. I do feel that no two people were ever so entirely designed and intended for each other as you and I.

Yours always, NINA.

One letter missing.

Of course I am glad that we have won victories—gladder of those on land than that at sea, for the destruction of the Spanish fleet is too awful to "cheer"; Capt. Philip was quite right. When

Dewey did the same thing at Manila I only thought of the glory. I suppose he was so far round the curve of the world that one only saw the gold eagles on his mastheads, and missed the blood and fire below. Here we are spared no details, and I can't get the descriptive words out of my head. And I'm so sorry for that brave old gentleman, Cervera. I wish it had not had to happen. "A Fourth of July present," indeed! I remember when I was a little girl, and used to rejoice over bits of good luck, Ellen would say to me, "Maybe you've got some other poor body's blessing." I think we have got some other poor body's blessing this time, but if it means peace—as I suppose it does, for surely Santiago can't hold out much longer—perhaps we do well to be thankful. The Fourth of July began blackly enough for us here. We had not heard of the victory of the day before, and every one thought the army's position more than precarious. There were rumors, even, of a crushing defeat, and this on top of the sad death list of the previous engagements, made us all anxious and depressed. When the news came of the taking of San Juan Hill and the heights, and, later, of the defeat of Cervera, the relief was beyond expression. Only I could not be glad at first till I knew you were safe, and now I can't be glad because of those who were killed. But the charge of our soldiers up the hill must have been splendid! Mr. Donaldson was laughing at me yesterday because I said I know how that black regiment felt, when some Englishman warned them that they'd all be killed, and they answered, "What the hell do we care?" I can imagine feeling so—at least I could if I did not have you, my dear beloved, to come back to. I should not want to run into danger, up hill or down, while I have such a good life ahead of me.

How soon shall you be coming home if Santiago surrenders, and peace is declared? At once?

Yours always, NINA.

P. S.—I am so sorry my last letter missed you, but it wasn't very interest-

ing. Just an account of my dinner at the Tempests, and of how I sat next Mr. Donaldson, and liked him. Oddly enough, I found I had seen him before, the night when I first met you, as I was driving away from the ball. He was arguing with the police, who ventured to dispute the right of way through that street, I remember, and his protest quite delayed my departure. He isn't so *very* good-looking, but he is interesting to talk to. He spends the summer here at the clubhouse.

It seems incredible that I should be going to see you to-morrow! I could have kissed the little boy who brought the telegram! I send this note to your hotel as you direct (mark the meekness of the word), but I don't quite understand why I am to meet you in town instead of your coming here? It is not like your usual ceremoniousness, dear, so I know the occasion must be urgent. And what do you mean about "sailing at once"? Telegrams are so—I was going to say unsatisfactory, but any message that tells me you are coming, and that I shall be with you, is the very best message in the world. At eleven, then, you may meet me at the ferry. It is not unprecedented for me to go to town for the day even in the hot weather; a woman always has something in the way of fineries to buy. How glad I am that it is nearly night now, and how I wish I could add to to-morrow all the hours I have begrudged to-day. I hope I shall please you when you see me again.

Yours always, NINA.

What very brief snatches of happiness we have! Yesterday was gone in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, and everything is changed back again to the quiet of my daily life. Our meetings are so short, and our partings so long. Of course I see that you must go, and *that* being so, you could not go too quickly. I hope you will find Col. Greville less seriously ill than your mother's cable seemed to indicate. I hope so with all my heart, dear. Any sorrow

to you and yours is my sorrow also. But if you should find your father completely recovered, and could turn around and sail back again to me—that would be good! I don't feel as if I had seen you at all, and when I remember that I might have gone to town a whole hour earlier if I had not been a little haughty about going at all, I could beat myself. But how was I to guess that "sailing at once" meant that very afternoon? I shall begrudge that hour *always*, if I live to be a hundred—which Heaven forbid! Still, we had a nice, dear, little time of our own while we were together, and I am sure the head waiter at Sherry's had very evil thoughts about us. But that's better than thinking we were just married, isn't it? It is like a dream to me now; our meeting and our talk, and our luncheon, and our drive down to the dock, and our parting in your cabin— Wasn't I good? Didn't I behave well? Was there ever a more Spartan lady (externally) than I? And I was good when I went home so sadly all by myself, and only cried about ten tears before I went to bed. (Half of those were for you, because I knew how awfully you hated leaving me.) Come back soon, my dear, and take very good care of your poor arm. It hurts me to think that you were wounded, and kept it from me.

Yours always, NINA.

IX.

(Four months later.)

While I do not doubt that whatever you have done has been done for the best, surely, now that Col. Greville is better, and the miners at the coal pit have been reduced to reason, and your place and people generally set in order, you might turn your attention to your wife. I am getting very restless and impatient. I cannot understand what keeps you. Your letters are, if possible, more tender than before, and I will not be suspicious of your affection, for you could not write as you do, particularly, as *often* as you do, if you were in any way changed to me. But something

about the situation has changed, and I do very much beg of you, dear, to tell me what it is. I am a reasonable woman, and I can make the best of things, but I am not a meek woman, and I will not answer for the consequences if you withhold your confidence. I'm not good, naturally, though I have always been gentle and bidable with you, and just now I am in danger, I tell you frankly, of becoming very much interested in a man who is very much interested in me. Don't be too angry. I don't mean to be wicked, but when I am sad about you I want sympathy; and when I am in good spirits I can't help getting into mischief, and, oh, if you want me, please come and take care of me, for on the days when I am hot with anger against you, there's no telling what I mayn't do. I feel as if I were capable of anything.

Yours always, NINA.

(To Paul Donaldson.)

Thank you for the books. What a good memory you have for trifles—as Aunt Anne once said she had, when some rash man asked her if she remembered that he had been abroad all summer. You need not have returned them so promptly—unless you wanted to see me? I wish I had been at home. How do you like having to ring a front door-bell and make formal inquiries, after being used to find me on the piazza or in the garden? But it was getting cold for Arcadia. Please like me in town, and come to-morrow.

Your sincerely,

NINA LANGDON.

(To Henry Greville.)

I am so sorry. I would not grieve you for the world, and I am a perfectly hateful woman—there's no question about it! Why, I *know* you would come if you could, and if you can't tell me the reason now, I'll wait a little—but not long—with my best good-conduct sash on and my most demure expression of countenance. I have been tormenting you, I'm afraid, but I've been so tormented myself! If you knew

what an imagination I've got, you would be sorry for me. It has suggested everything in the world to me about you. You have been almost every kind of man from a burglar to a bigamist, and I've been in all moods of unhappy and angry womanhood. But now I am in my right senses again, I hope, so please forgive me. I know I must be good because I want to please you, and—because there is nothing else to be. I like your way of dealing with contumacious ladies; it is rather Turkish, but not altogether to be discarded on that account, and then you are so wise in seeing my side of the question also. Really and truly, it's no wonder that I become rather restless and a little reckless, is it? But I mean to behave as well as possible now for as long as I can (which, after all, doesn't commit me to very much excellence), and you'll come soon? We are back in town. The Horse Show is going on, and all the milliners and dressmakers have reaped rich harvests. Presently all the doctors will be reaping rich harvests, too, for nobody escapes the Horse-Show cold—not even those who don't go to the Horse Show. I'm going to-night with the Tempests, and— A letter from you has just come, and I break off to read it. I hope you are well, and that you tell me when you are likely to sail, and that you say pretty things about me, dear.

No, no, no! I won't be patient, and I must understand. What is this mysterious thing which keeps you in England? I will not be treated like a child. Col. Greville continues to do well; your mother has had you all to herself for four months; the difficulty with the miners is settled; and yet you cannot come? There will be difficulties with more than miners if you don't. Do you think I have no spirit and no pride? Tell me something to appeal to my reason, and I will believe, and do my best to make allowances, but to be put off with generalities, as if I were an inquisitive schoolgirl, is beyond bearing. Oh, forgive me! I know you couldn't have meant that—you, who are always so courteous and careful where I am concerned. But you can't understand how

strange it all seems to me or you would explain more. The whole thing lies in a nutshell. Give me some reason that I can respect, and I will promise to be patient, but don't, I warn you, don't let me doubt you.

Yours always, NINA.

(To Paul Donaldson.)

If it was only because you were afraid my ladyship would see too much of you, that you did not come again on Sunday, disabuse your mind of any such absurdity. Why do you suppose I put on my very best frock, and was fussy about my shoes, if not to discuss the affairs of the nations with you? And then you did not come, and I had to discuss my own failings with Mr. Tempest (I don't want you to think I was quite alone all the afternoon), and it wasn't inspiring. I should not mind if he made me out bad, but he gives me the feeling that I am unattractive, and I don't like that a bit. Thank you so much for the picture and for your note. Of course I enjoyed the Horse Show the other night, and if I seemed at all absent-minded, it was only on account of the noise and confusion. It always bewilders me. You are very kind, but there is nothing that troubles me particularly. If there were, and you could help me, indeed I would tell you. We have been friends from the first moment we met, haven't we? Till to-morrow, then. I shall surely be in by five o'clock, surely.

NINA LANGDON.

(To Paul Donaldson.)

Now that you are gone I can think again, but I don't know what to say to you. There are so many things I can't tell you, that I do so want to tell you. Don't have anything more to do with me. I am a snake! And yet, do come on Tuesday, for I am so sorry—so sorry to have hurt you. Oh, dear me, life is very complicated, and almost every step we take is in the wrong direction. You are so masterful and so sure you are right, and so certain that nothing I can say will make any difference in your feeling! I can't be *sorry* that you love

me, but I must not be glad, because nothing can come of it—nothing. I have no business to love you, for I can't marry you. And, indeed, you should not want to marry me—I am sure you are the last man in the world to be hampered by a wife—but don't stop liking me all at once, please.

NINA LANGDON.

(To Henry Greville.)

I am bad—I know I'm bad, I mean to be bad, and indeed, if I read your letter right you give me permission in a way. At least so I interpret the sentence where you say that it is natural, and to be expected, and that you must bear it as well as you can now, and manage me differently when you come. If only I could be all sorry or all angry it would be so much easier. But when you say you will "bear it as well as you can now," I want to cry, and say I'll be good for the rest of my life; and when you tell me about "managing me differently when you come," I want to snap my fingers, and advise you to hurry a little. I am a good-for-nothing woman! I have made trouble for you, and I am making it this minute for somebody else, and I just can't help it. Do you wish to let me go? I suppose we could have such a marriage annulled, couldn't we? Oh, dear, can you *want* to let me go, I wonder? There is something in your letter—I don't know how to describe it, a kind of undercurrent of sadness as if I were hurting you by my lack of trust, and yet how can I help being suspicious, when you don't come, and won't tell me why? If you were in my place wouldn't *you* think it strange, and if there were a very charming and interesting woman whom you saw almost every day—a woman who seemed to be in love with you? Perhaps there is. That might explain it. Oh, I hate her! Why didn't you tell me, and I would have released you at once. Now that I come to remember, it was I that spoke first about our marriage. I was a shameless hussy. I said so at the time, but indeed it was because I felt so disturbed about your going away without my hav-

ing the right to go after you if you needed me. And you were wounded, and never even let me know; so you couldn't have wanted me with you, because if you had *there* was an excuse! I am so sorry. *Is* there another woman? Did you like her before you liked me (I know you *did* like me), and is she pretty? Mr. Donaldson is extremely handsome. Oh, how long ago it seems since I first saw you.

NINA LANGDON.

(To Paul Donaldson.)

Yes, yes, I want to see you just as much as you want to see me. We won't talk of the future. You say there's nothing so uncertain. A little while ago I thought mine was decided for me. Now I am not sure of anything—except that perhaps we should do well not to like each other too much? But everything seems to me possible or impossible according to my mood. You have made me think and feel about things which I never thought or felt about before, and you have been very good and forbearing. Knowing as I do now what a passionate temper you have, I am astonished that you did not lose control of it long ago. I forgive you. Of course I forgive you. I'm afraid I didn't dislike it; only don't be furious with me again, please. I can't help telling you the things you don't like to hear. Let us just go on as we were, and enjoy such good things as we may have, and not think of those which are probably forbidden us.

NINA LANGDON.

(To Paul Donaldson.)

I will think of what you say. But you must remember that you are giving me advice in the dark. You know very little about me, as I know very little about you. Can't we keep on being friends a little longer? Truly I am not free to think of anything else, and you—you really don't want to marry except because you happen to want me. A ladylove seems to belong to your character, but a wife—somehow I can't feel that she would be suitable. There was

an eminent lawyer once, to whom a lady said, "Mr. Carisbroke, you ought to marry," and he replied (and I'm sure you would feel *just* the same way if it were not for me, and perhaps some day you'd feel that way if you owned me), "My dear madam, I would; indeed, I have seriously considered it, but, you see, I'm prevented by the thought that every day when I came home—well, *there she'd be*, you know!" Don't think I mean to be frivolous or flippant—I don't dare write too seriously, and that's the truth. I am more puzzled and troubled these days than you know. Come to-morrow.

NINA LANGDON.

(To Henry Greville.)

You might have answered my letter. The mere conventions require that. And I've been waiting from day to day, like the fool, the very patient Griselda-like fool I am, thinking you would contradict everything, scatter my accusations to the winds, and restore all my old faith in you—as you could, even now, with a few words—and make the past five months seem like an evil dream. I know I haven't behaved well as regards some one else, but hot-tempered as he is, I think he would have forgiven me—though I should not easily forgive myself—any sorrow I might cause him. But to you—you, whom I have loved and married, and written out my heart to—you, whom I have made excuses for, till I was ashamed to myself of my own lack of pride—to you, I have, so far, done no wrong. My letter may have been ill-advised and hasty, but it merited the courtesy of an answer. Perhaps you felt silence was answer enough—and so it is, answer enough for a coward! I remember you said in one of your letters that you "sometimes feared the Cuban war had left you but a broken wreck of a man, not half worthy of me." I was terrified at the time, thinking you meant you were ill, but now I feel I should not care if they had broken your body to pieces as long as they left me the heart and mind of the man I loved. If only I could think that you

had never got my letter I should have some little respect left for you, but Mrs. Greville's last letter to me mentions that it had arrived, and would be given to you as soon as you came back from—I don't think she said where. She, dear lady, had no idea that things were not as they always had been between us. Will you explain to her that I have broken the "engagement" which she believes in? As a matter of fact, I will consult some one about having our marriage annulled, or set aside. There must be *some* way in which it can be done secretly; but, if not, I am prepared to face even the possible publicity of divorce—anything rather than belong to a man who no longer loves me, and whom I despise. You shall be troubled with no more letters.

NINA LANGDON.

X.

(To Paul Donaldson.)

You were right and I was wrong. You said you nearly always managed to get what you most earnestly desired in this world, and that you knew I was making too much of the barriers between us—but indeed you did not know how strong those barriers were. Now I find them melting into thin air. If you want me, dear, I think you may have me; only you must give me time to arrange things, and consult with my people. Don't let us say anything to anybody for a little while, and if you will so far trust me, don't ask me any questions about the things which are past. You know there is something to be broken off, and I know that you love me for what I am—not caring what I've done, in which you are very different from most men! Not that I have ever done anything *very* wicked. When will you come?

NINA LANGDON.

(To Paul Donaldson.)

You frighten me a little with your vehemence—but it's not entirely disagreeable to be frightened. Still, "These violent delights have violent ends," and

I am sometimes superstitious about the future. You are very good and thoughtful, and make things as easy as you can for me, but you can't help being impatient, naturally, and I don't blame you. Indeed, I should not be pleased if you were not. Only trust me a little longer. Things shall be arranged soon, and then what a charming life we shall lead! Where shall we go? What shall we do? How shall we live? We may as well amuse ourselves by building castles in the distance—which naturally suggests Spain. Shall we go to Spain, and see blinding sunshines, and black shadows, and Moorish arches, and proud beggars (though they are not indigenous only to *that* country), and bright-eyed women, and dull old priests, and—but that's all I know about Spain, except bullfights, and I would not go to a bullfight for the world! Well, shall we go, and write a book about all we see? What nice times we shall have together—How glad I am that you love me.

NINA LANGDON.

(To Paul Donaldson.)

The play was charming, even Aunt Anne commended its wit. Thank you so much for my pleasant evening. I ought to be in bed and asleep, for it is long after twelve, and the house is as silent as a tomb, but somehow I feel wakeful and a little sad, after all our gayety, and afraid of I don't know what. Not of you, dear, though you do tell me you are afraid of yourself on the few occasions when you lose your temper. I am so poor spirited I hardly know what it is to be angry, except when I see some wanton piece of cruelty or injustice, and then I'm like you, I don't know what I am doing! You seem to be several sorts of people rolled into one. You look so calm and self-controlled, and your mouth sets so firmly; it isn't till one gets to your eyes that one guesses they could sometimes blaze with fury. I have seen them. And I've also seen them look at me, and change to the mildness of an angel's—not that I care much for the dispositions

of such angels as *I* know anything about! Good-night—I shall miss you very much the days you are in Washington.

Yours always affectionately,
NINA.

(Cable from Henry Greville, London.)

"Sailing at once. Have written.
"H. G."

(Telegram from Nina Langdon to Paul Donaldson. Washington—some days later).

"Forgive me. I could not write. When do you come back? N. L."

(To Henry Greville.)

What have I done! Oh, my dear, why didn't you tell, why didn't you explain? Did you honestly think that I should love you less if you came back to me maimed? Would you have loved *me* less if I had been hurt and wounded? Here you have been suffering horribly, with the prospects of this dreadful operation hanging over you, and the fear of losing your arm, and you deliberately leave me to believe you indifferent, or tired of me, rather than let me know the truth. You "could not bear to speak of it while the result was uncertain"—you "hated the thought of asking me to take back such a poor damaged property," but it was *my* property. You had no right, no *right* to withhold my share of your anxiety! I should have suffered miserably if I had known, but not one half—not one quarter as much as you have made me suffer through not knowing. Oh, how bad I've been to you, and nothing I can ever do will make up for it! Every doubt I have had of you, every unkind word I have said to you, comes back and torments me almost unendurably. And you don't even know how bad I have been! I was going to marry some one else if only our marriage could be set aside—I can't write about it, and I could not expect you to forgive me if I did not know you would understand—you always do, dear, and to understand ev-

everything is to forgive everything. There is some one whom I have injured more, even, than I have injured you. I don't know which way to turn to set things right. I've made more mischief than if I had really been a wicked woman—and I don't deserve that you should be landing to-morrow, alive and well, and with two good arms to—but perhaps you won't want to hold me when you think what a poor wife I have been to you? When will you come to see me? I don't know whether I shall be most indignant, or most ashamed, or most entirely, bewilderingly glad when I see you, beloved. But nothing will matter when we are together. I will send this to your hotel.

Yours always, NINA.

(To Paul Donaldson.)

I don't know any way of telling you what I have to tell you that would make it any easier for me to say or for you to hear. You naturally thought I had been engaged to some one before you and I met, and that it was from this entanglement that I was setting myself free. But the truth is that I was married. No one knew. I just went and did it secretly, before my man started for Cuba. After the war we were separated; there were misunderstandings—I meant to have my marriage annulled, and—oh, you know what I meant to do. I persuaded myself that I had the right and the will to do it. But I have neither now. I was horribly, desperately mistaken. He is one of the dearest gentlemen in the world, and I belong to him. I can atone to him, at least, for the wrong I've done him; but to you I can never atone, unless you learn to thank Heaven for having kept you free of me. Please, please don't be too hard on me. If you knew how miserable I am you couldn't be! Think how you would feel if you had done me some awful injury, and could never all your life long forgive yourself or forget it for a moment. There is no use in writing any more, is there? But perhaps if I might speak to you for one moment—if you would be so kind as to tell me yourself you forgave me, it might help

a little. Would you come late, late this afternoon? I ask you very earnestly and humbly. I am going out to dinner and to the opera—think of having to sit through those hours with this in my mind!—but I will dress early, and come down and wait for you in the little room off the hall, where I always write. Perhaps I shall be able to let you in myself. Only give me ten minutes to say good-by to you, and try to keep me from telling you how much I care. My husband comes to-morrow, and I feel as if I could not meet him unless you were at peace with me. Do you think you ever can be? NINA GREVILLE.

This letter was not sent; apparently the next one was.

(To Paul Donaldson.)

Will you come to see me late this afternoon? I will wait for you downstairs, and try not to keep you long. I have done something dreadful beyond words! I cannot write about it. I am not free, and cannot be free to marry you. I thought I should be, but it is all a mistake, and we must not see each other any more after to-day. Try not to be angry with me. N. L.

(Telegram from Henry Greville.)

"Vessel arrived. Record broken. Shall be with you late this afternoon.
"H. G."

*Fragment of Nina Langdon's Diary.
Written apparently some hours later.*

So then I am entirely deserted. I suppose no woman ever deserved her fate more than I do, but I am too numb to think—too absolutely exhausted to feel. I have sat like an automaton through the opera, speaking and smiling when any one talked to me—burning and aching inwardly with miserable shame and dread, excitement and anxiety. Every breath I drew seemed to come straight from my heart, and to scorch my throat as it passed. And outwardly I was polite and pleasant. Thank God that's finished—nobody but

a woman brought up as I've been would have borne it. Curiously enough, now that the strain is over—that I may suffer in peace and quiet if I please, I *can't* suffer. But I can't sleep either. I keep going over, minute by minute, all the long afternoon that I waited for Henry—or a word from him—How *can* a man who has once loved a woman leave such a letter unanswered even if he meant never to see her again? I can't understand it. It must have been received. He would have come here if he had not gone to the hotel. Of course he is right—justly and terribly right to give me up—but not without a word—not without letting me tell my own story. Sometimes it seems to me that I am not quite unforgivable. I had waited and hoped so many months before I made my great mistake. A man can't leave a woman of my kind to doubt, as he let me doubt, and expect her to be patient. I thought he would understand—he has always understood before—and even such weakness and wickedness as mine has some excuse. His silence can only mean that he is implacable, and I'd rather, I think, have been killed—as he once threatened.

And than that horrible scene with Paul! whose contempt stung me into a brutality of which I had not believed myself capable. I had meant to tell him how I had cared and would always care for him, how the memory of every time we had been together would be dear to me, how the pain I had caused him hurt me, how much I suffered in parting from him—and instead I found myself, under the lash of his scorn, crying passionately that I had always known in my heart where I belonged and whom I loved, and *he* was less than nothing to me now. For one moment I was almost frightened—and glad to be frightened—at the fury I saw in his eyes, but he mastered himself, and sneered, and said good-by. So he has gone, and I shall never see him any more. I should have liked him to forgive me in the end even if he hated me. For myself, I care very little what happens. My husband will never come to me again now, I know. I

must write to-morrow, and beg him to take all the necessary steps for a separation. He ought to be free. As for me, I see myself, tired and forlorn, living, living, living to an abominable old age. I shall not even have his letters, mine which he—which *they* (oh, how horrible and how tragically humorous!) will return, I shall pack away with this in the secret drawer of my old table.

When shall I come back to it, I wonder? If the cable from mamma to-morrow confirms the news of my father's illness I may have to sail at once. I am too tired to think it all out.

Oh, good-by, good-by, good-by—all my life that I have lived. Good-by, my best beloved— If I dared, I would send all this great packet to you, and perhaps some day you might forgive me, for underneath it all I loved you.

(Letter from Henry Greville.)

It has taken me a whole afternoon and night of torment to understand and forgive you, my poor little lady, but I do understand, and I do forgive you. It was all my fault. I walked miles and miles over the carpet of my room abusing myself after I stopped abusing you. How early may I come this morning?

Yours ever,

H. G.

*Another Fragment of the Diary.
Written apparently some days later.*

Was ever a troublesome, mischief-making woman so rewarded? Everything is happily settled. My family are reconciled—I sail to-morrow with my husband.

Note by M. H. P.

I consider it only just to "Miss Langdon's" relatives, whosoever they may be, to say that the table in which (quite by accident) I found this manuscript, had been slightly damaged by fire, and was sold by order of some insurance company; the family, unconscious of its secrets, would naturally have been indifferent as to what became of it. As to the young lady herself, I can only say that any "reward" to so "troublesome" and "mischief-making" a woman seems to me the height of poetic injustice.

FIVE MINUTES' CONVERSATION

BEING A BALLROOM EPISODE

By Maarten Maartens

Author of "Some Women I Have Known," "God's Fool," Etc.

THE big rooms were full of music and movement, of many mingling perfumes and overheated air.

It was the usual unwholesome but not unpleasing atmosphere of a big entertainment, at a big house, in a very big city. Everything was big. And biggest of all, even bigger than the rooms, was the crowd.

Affectation was there, and official boredom, and dead-done world-weariness, and also youth, good looks, bright girl-vanity, the vast happiness of utter self-contentment, complete satisfaction, at some twenty or thereabouts, with one's self, one's appearance, one's clothes.

Of the many who could show cause for such self-approval none stood out more prominently than Margaret. Yet none seemed less conscious of the notice a pretty girl always willingly attracts. Throughout her success in society she has retained that simplicity of manner. I believe, by those who can distinguish, it is considered her principal charm.

I cannot distinguish. To me she has always been all charm.

She was talking to Maxwell that evening, when I saw her, to Maxwell, the South African millionaire. Two or three paces behind them, in an irregular half circle, waited the usual little crowd of her admirers, moodily looking on.

The next waltz was mine, and I went up and claimed it. Maxwell fell back with a scowl. He is not accustomed to anybody getting in his way.

"My turn next," he said, and threw into his accent a great deal of extra meaning.

"Is Nellie here?" asked Margaret, as we glided away.

"No, she went to the opera. She is coming on later."

"Alone?"

"Sclater is with her."

We took half a dozen steps before Margaret rejoined:

"Why didn't you go with your wife, Guy?"

And half a dozen more before I answered, laughing lightly:

"Because she preferred to go with Sclater."

Margaret dropped the subject, with the same manifest little effort with which she had raised it. A thoughtful frown settled on her exquisite brow.

"Nobody knows my step as you do," she said. "I wish I could always waltz with you."

"And not with Mr. Maxwell?"

"Never with Mr. Maxwell."

"My dear cousin, I hope we shall waltz together at many a ball yet, for many a year."

"I—I am not so sure."

"Why? Are you going to marry somebody who will carry you off to India?"

"Don't talk nonsense. I am going to marry nobody. But father was talking this evening, very seriously, of definitely giving up London and retiring into Inverness-shire for good."

"He has said that sort of thing ever since I can remember."

"Yes, but this evening he seemed quite in earnest."

"More bills, or worse duns, than usual."

"You may laugh——"

"Indeed, I am quite serious."

"But, Guy, it is a horrible thing to be poor."

"Do you think I have forgotten? Only three years ago I was a great deal poorer than your father."

She was silent again. Then she said: "Somehow, I believe this time it is quite serious. I shall have to go and milk cows in the wilds of Inverness."

"Happy cows!"

"You are quite mistaken," she answered, demurely. "Unintelligent milking disagrees with cows. But even were it not so, they would know I was cross. I hate Inverness-shire. I am always cross up there."

"You malign yourself. Ever since you were a baby you have been contented to do what you believed to be your duty. And so now you are going to dance—cheerfully—with Mr. Maxwell."

Halfway through the next dance—which I was lounging out by a doorway—she suddenly stood before me. Her face had gone white.

"Can you spare me five minutes' conversation?" she said.

I should have laughed at the formal words, had her manner not betrayed the extremest agitation.

"I am always at your service, as you know," I replied. And I led the way, circumspectly, into a little side room, or alcove, with a good deal of greenery. Margaret dropped my arm and sank down on a settee, against a background of palms.

"Mr. Maxwell has asked me to be his wife," she gasped.

"That sort of thing will happen to a charming woman," I answered, gravely.

"Oh, Guy, talk sense for once! Talk sense!" There was such a heartrending note in her voice that I changed my whole manner at once.

"My dear Meg, whatever's the matter? The man has asked you to be his wife. Well, you can accept him, if you like, or refuse him, and there's an end of it."

"No, no. That is not the end—not the end!"

I would have taken her hand, but she hastily withdrew it.

"Come," I said, "we are cousins. We have been intimate friends ever since we were babies. You must be more explicit. What's the row?"

She smiled. The lighter words seemed to steady her nerves. She opened her lips to speak.

"If you don't want the fellow, refuse him, and there's an end," I interposed, simultaneously. But she said:

"He has given me to understand that I cannot refuse him."

"What folly!"

"Father is mixed up, it appears, in some South African speculations of his. The ruin we have always been expecting, all my life long, is come at last. Unless——"

"Unless you consent to be Mrs. Maxwell."

"He did not say that!" she objected, eagerly. "He did not say it."

"But he implied it"

She sank back.

"I understood it to be so."

I waited, and thought it out, and gave her time. Yet my question, when it came, was the one that would always have turned uppermost.

"Do you want to marry this Maxwell, Meg?"

She hesitated, faltered. "I want to marry nobody," she said.

"So I have sometimes presumed, judging by your attitude through these three seasons. Are you sure—forgive my venturing on a subject I have always carefully avoided, but now you grant me permission—are you sure your attitude is a sensible one?"

"You mean because I have refused people?"

"You have refused half a dozen, to my knowledge, some of whom I, a humble person like myself, would most certainly have accepted."

"You!" she spoke quickly, a little bitterly. "It is pretty of you to say that."

"Well, then, refuse Mr. Maxwell. He is the richest offer you will ever get. Every girl in these rooms would jump at him."

"My father—you forget about my father!"

"By no means. But even you, Meg, must not marry to please your father."

"I do not think it is merely a question of pleasing. As I understand the matter, it is a question of salvation or ruin."

"Hush! Calm yourself, I beg you. I will—"

"How can I be calm? Father, whatever he may say, could not live away from London. He mopes, fit to die, at the old place in Inverness-shire. And yet the place is nice enough—"

"I know, dear, I know. It is he who grows cross there, not you. You would be happy anywhere—"

"Not cross, Guy. He is never cross. Don't say that. But his health is so bad, and the winds—"

"Margaret—excuse my interrupting you—but I know Maxwell; I—I think you must have mistaken. I can't imagine his wanting to influence you in the way you describe. It doesn't look like him."

"Why not?" she queried, nervously.

I gazed down at the point of my shoe.

"Well, you see, he's a business man," I answered, awkwardly, "and it doesn't look to me like good business. It isn't the way to get a good wife—this knife-at-your-throat manner—and he'll want the best wife that money can buy."

"Then he wouldn't have come to me."

I turned my slow gaze full upon her. Our eyes met.

I did not speak, for I could not. Her long lashes sank.

"There is no hurry," I said at last. "You can take time to consider."

"No, that would be useless."

"Do you mean that you dislike him?"

"Oh, no, not more than other men. I—I rather like him. I like him very well, as men go."

"You are hard on men."

"No, by no means. Only I do not want to marry—I don't care about marrying, Guy."

"You intend to remain an old maid?"

"I don't know. I don't think I care about marrying, Guy." Her manner was agitated; she half hid her face be-

hind her fan. She shrank away, as if she was anxious to escape from me, after having called me to her aid.

There came to me a sudden intuition of what I ought to do. I arose from my place beside her.

"I will seek out Maxwell, and ask what he really meant," I said. She did not attempt to restrain me, but before she could have done so I was gone.

I found Maxwell irritably quaffing champagne at the buffet. He smiled in a painfully careless manner as I approached.

"You won't mind my talking about my uncle's affairs?" I asked straightaway.

"Why not say your cousin's at once?" he replied.

I laughed frankly into his face.

"So much the better," I said. "Let us call things exactly as they are. I like that."

"By all means."

"You have made my cousin an offer of marriage."

"I have. You are the last man who has a right to object to that."

"What do you mean?" I exclaimed, annoyed.

"Let us speak of things exactly as they are," he replied. He set down his glass. "But we have no need to enlarge," he added, walking away.

I followed him.

"She believes you to have said that you would ruin her father, unless she accepted you."

Then he turned, in the full light of a dozen candles, in a corner. His bronzed face grew brown.

"I never said anything of the kind!" he cried.

"I know you did not. That's why I came."

His manner toward me changed.

"I told her that her father's affairs were in a bad way," he said, genially. "So much she must surely have known—"

"Since her birth," I put in.

"And I told her, that as far as his South African ventures were concerned, I could probably be instrumental in staving off an impending crash."

"That sounds rather like what she told me."

"There's no connection between the two matters," he answered, stiffening. "Your uncle came to me this morning, in despair. I have promised to help him, whatever occurs."

"All the same, the combination gives you an unfair advantage over the girl," I protested irritably.

He bit his lip.

"Go back," he said, weighing each word, "and tell her I have just received other advices from Johannesburg. Her father can sell out at par. Will she understand that?" he added, with a wry smile.

I would have thrust out my hand, but drew it back with a man's dread of melodrama.

"Oh, hang it," he said, hastily, "although I have made my money in South Africa, you may still give me credit for a decent instinct here and there."

As he said so, he gave me the clear outline of his shoulder, and I, realizing that our interview was over, pushed back through the brilliant crowd to the quiet corner, where I still found Margaret. A young man had been talking to her. She sent him away as I approached.

"You are quite mistaken," I said. "You have altogether misunderstood him. The South African imbroglia is coming right of itself. Your father can sell out at par."

She caught her breath and, as I again took the vacant seat by her side, she drew away the white clouds of her dress.

"And now," I continued, laying hold of my courage, and steadying my voice, "what are you going to do? Here is this offer of marriage, free and untrammelled, a 'yes' or a 'no'?"

"Leave me," she said.

"And let some young fellow come up and talk nonsense?"

"Some nonsense is much better to talk than some sense."

I bent forward, trying in vain to reach her averted eyes.

"Will you, in your turn," I said, "grant me five minutes' conversation?"

"No," she cried, starting up. "No,

no. Oh, Guy, what could you have to talk about, in such a tone as that?"

I, too, had started up. I stood facing her. My breath came and went.

"Let me speak," I said, thickly. "At last. Let me say what I want to say, and have to say—what I should have said a couple of years ago."

"Oh, no! no!" she repeated, and sank down on the sofa, hiding her face in her hands.

I bent over her.

"We have—liked each other all our lives. And three years ago I married Nellie."

"Hush!" she murmured behind her outstretched fingers. "Hush!" Then she suddenly dropped both her arms into her lap, and lifted a flushed face to me forcibly becalmed. "You are talking nonsense," she said.

"Horrible nonsense," I answered. "Look here, Margaret, I say it out, once for all, first time and last, in the long years that make life: I knew you. And I deliberately married Nellie. I married her, liking her well enough, admiring her, because she had money."

Margaret threw back her head, proudly.

"Why do you say these things to me? It is useless."

"You know it all—have always known."

"The less reason to—"

"I think not. Not to-night. Let me speak. I did Nellie no injury. She perfectly understood what we were doing. On her side, she married me, because she wanted to."

"You exaggerate, Guy. To us all you seemed very fond of each other."

"Exactly. That is what I am wanting to point out. We were, we are, quite sufficiently fond of each other. As for me, you are aware, Margaret, why I had to do as I did."

"I know that you had engaged your small fortune to save a friend," she answered, her dear eyes kindling. "I know that you had even mortgaged the one spot you love on earth."

"It would have killed my mother to see the old place sold up. Be glad, Mar-

garet, that no such sacrifice is required of you."

"Oh, Guy, for God's sake do not speak in that voice!"

I pulled myself together.

"You are free to take Mr. Maxwell or leave him," I said, lightly. "And if you take him, as I advise, I hope you will get on as well with him as, and even a little better than, Nellie gets on with me."

"And why, pray, do you want me to take him?" She tried to make her accents as light as mine.

I ignored her question, in indirect reply.

"Nellie and I have always perfectly understood the situation. And I think we have successfully developed it. There has been no question of aversion or antipathy, or any form of dislike. On the contrary, we continue to like each other, and we realize, conscientiously, without much effort, the sterling advantages accruing to each of us from our union."

"Don't use the word 'sterling' to a stranger. It is hardly—happily selected in your case." She moved her foot nervously, staring down, with sheer intent, on the little pearl-dotted shoe.

"You are cruel to me, Margaret, beyond words."

"Oh, forgive me! No, I was not cruel to you. I was thinking of myself and Mr. Maxwell."

"But you told me you liked him. I should not have spoken, no, not a word, had you not assured me you liked him, as much as any man—more, I understood."

She lifted her eyes from the shoe to her fan, and began plucking at its fluffy feathers.

"Oh, yes, more," she said.

"And you see, that is a most excellent beginning. Nellie and I started like that and have gone on improving. I feel confident we like each other better than when we started. We certainly are far more comfortable."

"You found it very difficult at first?"

"Of course it is difficult. After a time you learn to accept differences, and make allowances. You automatically

arrange things so as not to knock up against each other."

"Not to——"

"Knock up against each other. The great thing is to avoid all explanations and discussions and verbal agreements. Automatically, as I said, and often unconsciously, you agree not to disagree."

"And so you rub on. That is marriage?"

"I think so."

"Love and marriage."

"I did not say that."

"No, ah! no; I am not aware what I am saying. No, you did not say that." She looked away, toward the noisy ballroom, as if longing to escape, yet she drew closer. "And you are happy. You are happy?" she said.

"Quite sufficiently happy, as chances go. Happier than I deserve."

"Guy, you do not speak the truth."

"I assure you, on my honor, I am—content. How else should I have dared to speak to you of my feelings toward you? I desired the impossible. I knew, from the first, that I could never achieve it. It never looked otherwise than utterly impracticable, like a mansion in the moon. It would have meant misery to you. Nobody ever thought of it, of course, for one moment, as feasible. Nobody ever alluded to it in any way. Well, I have not achieved the impossible. And, honestly, I venture to say, I am contented."

"In spite of——" she checked herself. I allowed her time to go on, but she continued resolutely silent.

"Do not say what you were going to say," I then answered with what to the superficial may seem unreason. "I know of nothing that need disturb my contentment. Nellie likes to amuse herself in her own way. She allows me to choose mine."

Margaret remained silent, with a silence so full of meaning that it urged me to excess of speech.

"People are ill-natured," I went on, hurriedly, "but, even were all they say correct, it would not matter much. I tell you, Nellie and I are prepared, as all married people should be, for all

emergencies. We wear masks—the masks of marriage. Our hearts wear the masks of marriage. We are secure. Nothing can hurt the married couple who, by unspoken agreement, have donned the mask."

"And why do you say these things to me?"

"Because I want you—oh, dearest—nay, hush, you can trust me—because I want you, oh pearl among women, to meet your fate. Here you have been out, for three seasons, admired by all men, refusing one advantageous offer after another. What is to be the end? Your father is an old man, always hovering on the verge of insolvency. When he dies, well, what then? Are you going out as a governess, or a housekeeper? Are you going to paint on china?"

"You have no right," she interrupted, passionately, "to speak thus to me."

"The best of rights," I cried yet more passionately. "The best of rights!"

"My future is now in my own hands, and I——"

But I could not listen to her.

"All that I have been saying for the last five minutes, every word of it, proves my right!" I exclaimed.

"Right? There is no right like mine. And I claim it." I caught at her hand, and this time she did not more than half draw it away. "The man is a decent man, as such men go! You are rather taken by him. He is a great match, Margaret; he assures you a brilliant future! Marry him and, instead of going out as a governess to teach what you don't know, you will have the world at your feet. Think what it means. Realize what it means! Margaret, I want you to marry Maxwell. I am pleading with you to marry Maxwell. I—I——" My voice grew thick with emotion. The little room, its lights and its greenery, swam before my eyes. "I

—I am entreating you to do it. Think what that means. Try to realize what it means. I, who—I, oh, my God! I who have loved you all my life, who will always love you, who have never loved any other woman—because I have always loved you, and will never speak such words as these again as I have never spoken them before—I, who am losing you now for very love of you, for you will never speak to me again, but I do not care, because I want your happiness only to be safe, dearest, your future secured, your innocent womanhood protected—oh, Margaret! Margaret!" She drew away from me; I released her hand; she hung breathless.

"Guy!" she said. And the one word sank heavy with contending perturbations. There was regret in it as well as resignation, surrender as much as surprise.

Between us stood the small figure of my wife. She had come around from behind the green fernery or rockery, whatever it was.

"The masks are off," she said, in her shrill, not unmusical voice. I looked over her head. In the doorway Maxwell waited, come to claim the next dance, and a reply.

"Where is Sclater?" I said. "Wouldn't he come?"

Margaret put her arm into Maxwell's.

"Take care of her," I called after him. "She deserves it." Then I turned to my wife. "Unless I am very much mistaken, Margaret is going to marry Mr. Maxwell," I said.

"If she does, I will forgive you," answered Nellie.

"Tell her so. Tell her so, by all means," I said, earnestly.

"I will. And as a wedding present I shall send her a——"

"Have you any to spare?" I hastily interrupted, readjusting my own.



A BROTHER'S COMPLAINT

By Joseph C. Lincoln

Author of "Cape Cod Ballads," Etc.

MOST of the evenin's at our house everythin's nice as can be,
After the lamps are all lighted, after we've come in from tea;
Pa with his pipe and his slippers, puss sound asleep on the mat,
Mother a-rockin' and mendin' stockin's or somethin' like that,
Sis workin' things on a doily, butterflies, maybe, or flowers,
Me with a bully good story—that's when the sittin'-room's *ours*;
That's when we're *all* feelin' happy, comfy clear to the ground;
But Wednesday evenin's and Sundays, that's when the trouble comes 'round.
That's when Sis has her best dress on, that's when her hair is frizzed tight,
That's when the things on the table have to lay just about right,
That's when Pa keeps his new shoes on, doesn't smoke hardly at all,
That's when that dressed-up "best feller" comes swellin' 'round here to call.
Pa kind of groans when the bell rings, Mother looks up sort of sad,
But when he comes through the doorway, why you'd just think they was glad!
"Horrible weather we're havin'." "Next 'twill be snowin', don't doubt,"—
That's how they talk for ten minutes, then—well, it's time to get out.
Ma says she feels sort of sleepy; Pa he feels the same way;
Me and the cat know our bus'ness though we've got nothin' to say.
When the "best feller" comes callin', home-folks are put on the shelf.
Sittin'-room's hired for the evenin', door kind of shuts of itself.
Dinin'-room ain't a bit cozy, chairs are so wooden and hard,
Puss, she knows better'n to try 'em, she makes a start for the yard.
Course it's too early for bedtime, still you might just as well go;
When the "best feller" comes callin' nobody else has a show.
Summer time isn't much better, have to stay in then and scorch
While, through the window, you hear 'em whisperin' out on the porch,
Hear the old hammock a-creakin'—my! how you wish it would fall!
And you just hope the mosquitoes give 'em no comfort at all.
S'pose that I've got to expect it, now that my sister's engaged,
Mustn't complain 'cause her "feller"'s got all the rest of us caged.
He hasn't seen her get mad yet, nor when she ain't fixed her hair;
Wait, only wait till they're married, *that's* when I'm goin' to get square!

HER LETTERS FROM DAKOTA

By Miriam Michelson

Author of "In the Bishop's Carriage," Etc.

SIoux FALLS, June 17, 1902.
TO Mr. James B. Mitchell,
Life Reserve Building, New
York.

DEAR FATHER: Now that I am safely settled here and am quite well, you must stop worrying about me. The six months will pass—some of it has passed, by the way—and I'll be coming home to you so thankful to turn my back on the unutterable West.

Sioux Falls is no worse than we expected. What makes it bearable is that one can ride. I ordered a horse brought up to the hotel last week. It came—such a looking nag! All bones and bad temper. When I refused to accept such a mount and objected to the extortionate terms—you know the natives regard us as so much "grafting" material—the man turned upon me with, "Oh, I know your kind! This may be your first time here"—with a doubting accent on the *may*—"but it won't be your last. I know you, all right." I wish you could have been here to beat him for me.

But no—dear knows I wouldn't have any man here with me for the world. Do you suppose we could make anybody in Sioux Falls believe that you are my father? They'd simply know better. They know that any man who is with a woman here is about to become Number 2 or Number— (Set the limit yourself.) Why, not long ago a woman and her son came to our hotel "for the boy's health," Mrs. Ryerson, who knows everything about each arrival, informed me. "He needs the dry air." After a time I was told that the lad was not the lady's own son, but the son of her dear-

est friend; and that his mother being ill, the kind soul had volunteered to have him with her. They were married this afternoon, the lady's divorce having been granted at noon.

This Mrs. Ryerson that I've mentioned is the only woman I have anything to do with. She seems to be a sweet, amiable little thing some years older than I, and with the dearest baby in the world. Fancy what a brute a man must be who makes it necessary for his wife to bring her infant way out to Dakota to get her divorce!

Father, dear, you and I thought my case a mighty bad one. I begin to believe it's a very simple, straight and clean-cut misery—mine, compared to the complicated and cruel tangles men and women can get into. I've learned a lot, do you know, since I came to Sioux Falls. The first thing a woman expects who meets you here is that you will tell her what a wretch your husband is; the second, that you will listen while she relates her own tale of woe.

Don't be alarmed. You can rely upon my natural reticence and upon the fact that mine is very uninteresting material from a Dakotan point of view. Merely that one's husband became interested in another woman during one's absence—there's not spice enough in that for Sioux Falls. Mine's a dull, commonplace little story, whose villain will not even admit that he is a villain. No *bona-fide* Dakotan divorcee would think it worth her while to listen to me. She knows all the moves in so simple a game as that; she wants something which shall test her knowledge of the world, her experience of what bad

dreams may come to married mankind. Here we're all divorcees together (or would-be, will-be divorcees), and there are so many of us, we are so many evidences of incompatibility, and are so surfeited with tales of married infelicity that it takes a peculiarly harrowing case to stir our sated senses.

This beautiful Mrs. Ryerson's case must be such a one. I shall know what it is before long—it isn't in divorcee human nature to keep that sort of thing to oneself.

My love to you, dear father, and don't be bothered about me. I promise you I'll not grieve for Francis Maydewell. I'll neither touch pitch nor be defiled. I'll take care of my health and not be lonely,

Lovingly,

SALLIE.

You haven't heard how he takes the news of my coming out here, have you?

July 6.

To Miss Julia Mitchell,

West Seventy-second Street, New York.

DEAR COUSIN: As you will notice, this letter is not postmarked Sioux Falls. But I'm here just as truly. We divorcees have a way of sending our letters to the next town to be mailed. Why? Simply because we don't want to handicap you people on the outside who are kind enough to let us write to you. It isn't going to do a girl any good to have it known that she has a correspondent at Sioux Falls.

And do you notice that on the photo I enclose—I had it taken last week to prove to father that I am not pining—there is no mention of the photographer's residence for the same excellent reason? Sioux Falls is a capital place for a photographer to do business in, but he must be content with money and never yearn for fame. Julia, the very vainest creatures in the world are the going-to-be divorcees, those who are, so to speak, taking stock again of their attractions, making a second *début* and with the wisdom of experience this time. In this abominable little place where one has nothing to do but to live through six months—and bore one's ac-

quaintance with letters—the Ego grows to a monstrous size. You find yourself for an unnaturally long period at a stationary point, emotionally. The past is no longer yours. The present is an unreal, unrelated experience which you will do your best to forget as soon as possible. And the future? Well, the future—Let me tell you about the Mrs. Ryerson I mentioned in a letter which father will have told you about.

It makes me laugh as I write and remember the way I spoke of her. She came to my rooms yesterday, her faultless little hands clasped, her round little figure a Doucet marvel.

"Oh, I have such a lovely future in store for me, dear," she murmured.

I looked at her. It is not etiquette to bring one's sensibilities with one to South Dakota. A short married life and a merry interim—above all a contempt for heartbreak is the proper point of view. Nevertheless, one doesn't know exactly how to meet the *ingénue* pose in a woman who, though she is here with her baby and her nurse, is playing a part in the same sort of bitter farce of acquiring a residence as one's self and for the same purpose.

"I'm engaged," she faltered, holding out her hand.

I took it in mine, although I don't really know why and didn't know quite what to do with it. It's pretty enough to be put in a Louis Quinze cabinet.

"To the dearest fellow in the world," she went on. "A nearly millionaire—and one of the very swellest families—real old Knickerbocker."

"I——" Congratulate you, I was going to say, but my tongue stuck at that.

She didn't notice my hesitation. You know when a woman's telling you something about herself the most laconic listener in the world will do to play chorus.

"He is a bit younger than I am," she said, "but nowadays, you know, that sort of marriage is rather the vogue. His eldest sister (his family, by the way, knows nothing of it yet) is married to a Harvard junior, and if there's one family sweller than my *fiancé's* it's

his brother-in-law's. I'm very happy, dear."

"You must be," I mentioned. I thought it was my cue. But it wasn't. She was only looking critically in my Venetian mirror at a tiny mole she has at the corner of her eye.

"Yes," she sighed. "You see, I've known the other sort of marriage. Billy Ryerson is much older than I. They're so serious—old husbands—but they have good taste," she added, touching caressingly the gold embroidery of her chiffon *negligée*.

I looked the question.

"In clothes, I mean," she said. "Ryerson's in Paris, you know, and he sends me all my lingerie. It's so convenient."

"It—must be!" I gasped. "Then he doesn't—he isn't—I should suppose that—"

"Not at all," she assured me. "Of course, he did object at first—to my coming out here, you mean? But he bored me to death, and I'd told him so often that he agreed at last to a divorce. He's a very amiable man—Billy."

"He—must be," was all I could find to say.

"Yes, he is. But why shouldn't he be? I'm amiable, too. I simply can't bear disagreeable people. And just because your husband bores you to death is no reason why he shouldn't be polite enough to do you a favor when you're staked way out in a hole like this, and they do get up such lovely hand-made things in France. After all, it's his fault that I have to waste all these months here. If he wasn't such a stupid, I could be in New York now or—with him in Paris." She shivered at the thought, but cozily, her soft, little, round shoulders appearing to hug her enjoyingly. "But, really, do you know," she was standing now, her hand on the door, "he's a very good fellow—Mr. Ryerson."

"You ought to know," I said.

"He—really—I think he'd suit you. It would be the easiest thing to arrange a meeting, and I'd be glad to—"

"You're very kind," I laughed. "But—must you go?"

(If you had to spend an afternoon in this blessed place, Julia, with the prospect of a hundred like it ahead of you, you'd sympathize with my disinclination to let anything so naïvely entertaining escape.)

"I'll have to, quick," she said, flushing, "after what I'm going to tell you."

I looked at her, and as I looked, all at once the whole paralyzing truth veritably overwhelmed me. Of course—of course!—

"In a way, you know, I owe you a husband," she said.

"You feel the obligation?" I put it questioningly—nothing more. I wasn't really thinking of what I said or how I appeared to her. I was seeing Francis Maydewell and this pretty little thing together. I was back in last summer, while you and I were abroad; only I wasn't abroad, but hovering over Newport watching these two. And at the same time, in the back of my head I was cursing myself for my stupidity in not knowing her, while in the very same breath I was assuring myself that I couldn't possibly have recognized her as I didn't even know her name. (Father saw to that.) I was wondering whether she had known who I was when we first came together, and agreeing with myself that Maydewell is not a common name and that she must instantly have placed me.

I don't know what her answer was, but I came back to conscious hearing as she was stepping out of the door.

"... and so relieved that you take it the same way and are sensible about it," she was saying. "You're amiable, too. That's why I took such a liking to you from the first. *Au revoir*."

"Wait—what are you going to do with him?"

She stopped just out in the hall.

"With—?" She did have the grace not to say his name.

I nodded. "And how about the nearly millionaire who's younger than you are, but very swell?"

"Oh! I forgot for a moment I'd told you that. Well, dear," (note that "dear"; it's worthy of attention). "I really don't know. We are engaged.

But so, in a way, are—yes, *he* and I. But you never can trust the very best of them. Sometimes I think I'll have to take a run to New York and sort of clinch matters. They're awfully nice, both of them. But so is Billy Ryerson, and he has such good taste. And perhaps he wouldn't bore you. Think it over about him. He'll be back from Europe soon. *Au 'voir.*"

I began packing the minute she vanished. I had to or doubt my senses. I wanted something practical and honest to do, and I wanted to get out of that hotel where her rooms were next to mine. Address your next, care Mrs. Horace P. Witherspoon. The women here (natives) will not receive a to-be divorcee as a boarder in their houses. But I pay Mrs. Witherspoon Fifth Avenue rates for a tiny bedroom and sitting-room, and, besides, I've served a sort of apprenticeship here in town, which has established a kind of character for me. My landlady treats me civilly when no one's about, but there's an unspoken agreement that I am not to expect recognition on the street.

Admirable backwoods females—these Dakotans—not to be seduced from the path of virtuous ignoring of the mismated, even though the mismated happen to be clothed like Solomon and have money to burn! But—do you know, cousin, one very good way to make a goat out of a sheep is to treat that mild and gentlemanly animal as though he had all the angles, the temper and the intentions of the bearded debauchee who's only a distant relative and the disgrace of the family.

Good-night, Julia. It's too late to tell you or myself just how I feel about this encounter with the lady, who—etc., etc.

Affectionately,

SARA.

—
SIOUX FALLS, July 9.

To Victoire, Fifth Avenue, N. Y.

DEAR MADAME: I need some things, a list of which I inclose. Will you make them immediately, the least bit tighter than my last measure—I have grown thinner—and have them expressed to me?

The riding habit must be black, I think, and the coat loose. The street frock will surely be brown—you know the shade I wear. Something with a good air to it, something that a shorter, stouter woman couldn't possibly wear. The white chiffon hat you can trim as you please. The black one must be big and with a noble plume—velvet, and chiffon lined, I suppose. The toque should be a gold-brown straw. The afternoon toilet must be the heaviest Irish point. Now, do make something altogether desirable of this. You know I wear that sort of thing well. Let the pongee coat be good and long, I am tall enough to bear it, and get me such a collar of lace as will arouse even your enthusiasm. As to the silk shirt waist suit, let it be a sunburst. The color I leave to you, only remember I am a bit paler than I was last winter. For the evening toilet I must absolutely have a Doucet model. The details I leave to you; but I want something that you would not take the trouble to plan for anybody else.

Send your bill to my father, and rush this order if you expect to get others from
SARA MAYDEWELL.

—
SIOUX FALLS, August 30.

To Mr. Templeton Grant Gordon.

The Gotham, New York.

MY DEAR MR. GORDON: I can't imagine how you discovered my whereabouts. The saucy newspapers, I suppose. One week at the hotel (I have changed my address; your letter was forwarded to me) there was quite a reign of terror among us because of the presence of Mrs. Raymond Bellievre. Since the sensational trial of her husband and the exploitation of her own idiosyncrasies, the corridors had been haunted by reporters and special correspondents. I kept my room religiously till she bought a house farther up street and moved to it. She intends, I understand, to apply for alimony. And in order to do this, one must not only be a resident, but a property owner in Dakota.

If ever I have a daughter I'll make

her *dot* consist of a plot of land in Sioux Falls. Or, perhaps, when I get back, I'll turn boarding-school mistress and arrange that the last six months of the curriculum shall be devoted to attaining a residence in Dakota. Wouldn't mine be a popular and prosperous academy? Do you know any prudent mamma and far-seeing father who would feel they had done their level best for their offspring if they neglected to recognize how essential a part of a daughter's education this is?

Dear me! If I'd had the advantages of such a finishing school I wouldn't be wasting my time here now. Instead of gadding about the Continent with Madame du Long's other charges and meeting American boys with their tutors at the Louvre, at Versailles—yes, Templeton, I well remember that day at the War and Peace Museum at Lucerne and how madly uninterested an American girl and boy were in the relative smashing capacities of different sorts of projectiles! And what a banal little compliment it was even from an undergraduate to compare the damage done by a girl's eyes to the work of destruction before us—together too obvious. But you always were too obvious; as, for instance, in inquiring when I shall be back. How does that concern you? You've no right to write to me, young man. You've no right to take the tone you have. You may measure my very proper resentment by the short, curt note I (ought to) write you.

But to be candid, and for the discipline of your vanity, I would not write Satan himself a short letter. I simply couldn't. I am so unutterably bored here that I grasp at a correspondent (tut, tut, Templeton!) as greedily as did that proverbial drowning man try for a straw. Just wait till you're getting your divorce, my dear boy, and you'll sympathize with me. Do men come to Sioux Falls, and are there Dakota *divorcés* with one "e"? Indeed, there are, sonny, and they do. We're a colony of about two thousand, of which the men mostly go mad or are bored into reformation, or become merely imbecile and wish they were women, that they might

change their frocks six times a day and murder time. The wise ones go to work, become dry-goods clerks, cab drivers, shoe polishers. Imagine Templeton Gordon behind a counter selling calico to the virtuous, progressive-euchre-mad dames of Dakota! But anything that will blast the eternal and infernal *ennui* of "doing time." It is even so that we Dakota convicts express ourselves.

Ex.— Mrs. Francis Maydewell will have done her time by November 24.

November 24. The opera will have begun. Doors and windows will all have had an operation for summer catarract performed, and New York houses will be able to see out and fit to live in. The snow will have powdered the park, perhaps, and the trees will be skeletoned in soft black against a pure, pale sky. The theatres will be crowded. The restaurants and cafés will shine and echo to stringed bands. The electric lights—those stars of *mondaines*—will shine down suggestively. Along Fifth Avenue the carriages will bear the only women in America who know how to dress and how to pretend to be ignorant of what they know, and in one of them will be a woman in brown with a bunch of violets on her big sable muff, and on the curb—

My dear Templeton, I ought to be insulted by your premature proposal. I give myself credit enough to be sure I would certainly be, if it hadn't been for my residence in Sioux Falls, where such things are not always unknown nor unwelcome. But, oh! the pernicious effect of environment! There is a certain chivalry in the wording of your letter that appeals to me—and humiliates me. It sounds to me like the resentful drawing of your knightly sword to atone to a distressed damosel. You'd throw the cloak of your name about me and—

Good-night. I am tired. I was foolish enough to go to church to-day. The sermon was upon the text, "What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder," and the minister roasted divorce and divorcees to a turn. It's beautiful to see how the godly thun-

der against us here, and all the while the business men of the town rise up and call us blessed.

Gratefully,
S. M.

—
SIOUX FALLS, October 4.

To Mrs. Charles Underwood,
Central Park West, N. Y.

BETSY OF MY SOUL: And if you're "of my soul" why have I not written to you till my term was almost up? Simply and frankly because there is so much that's Betsy in this Dakota environment that I dared provoke no more from the apartment house of the same name.

(You unregenerate Betsy, I know you feel complimented!)

Well, you may be wicked, Betsy, but you are honest. I love you because I need not play the hypocrite with you. And I fear you for the reason that if I were tempted to try you'd find me out and expose me to myself.

My dear, I'm not coming to Dakota to get my next divorce. It's bad for one. You see, this unattached interim of a woman's life is desperately bound to be a *dégringolade*. You have been living (if you are a woman and honest enough to admit it—not the femininity, but the fact) you have been living not your own life, but the life of some imaginary woman your *ci-devant* husband fancied he fancied. The original, of which you are the wretched copy, is hung like an unattainable old master in the gallery of *Ci-devant's* brain. You never see it. You never attain it. You only know that it exists as the ideal, and that you're not it.

If *Ci-devant* happens to have been a domestic animal, then you are patterned upon a model which may be displayed to advantage only in the interior called home. In that case your mind, your ambition, your habits of life all revolve within those four walls.

But he may be horsy. In that event you learn the names of the winners and also how to lose manfully. Your horizon of pleasure is bounded by the weather the race-track god sends, and the gains or losses he distributes to your husband. Your dress even bears the subtle imprint of your husband's re-

flected taste; it becomes more *voyante*, more feminine—made to be judged at a distance and in a certain setting.

But he may be artistic—when you become a mental accompaniment to his solo, a background for his moods to paint themselves upon. Or he may be musical—in which case you dust the piano and talk learnedly about Brahms and Tchaikowsky. Or he may be—any old thing that you originally were not.

Suddenly—because of him or because of you—he becomes *Monsieur Ci-devant*. There you are—stranded high and dry without an individuality—*sans* temperament, *sans* tastes, *sans* everything. Everything that you were to please him, everything he made you is ashes to you now; is bound up indissolubly with the thing you're trying to—you must—forget. If you've acquired a taste for music, sweet sounds are now discord to your ear. If you had become domestic, every humble appurtenance of your home is an instrument of torture, a stimulus to memory.

In short, you are *désavoué*, you don't know "where you're at," you don't know whether or not you detest what you were merely because it pleased him that you should be so, or because you are now at liberty to be something else. You look at yourself as at some deminew, semi-old chicken hatched by circumstances. You doubt your virtues—you are not sure that you do not love your faults, since he hated them.

And in the midst of the moral and emotional *débâcle*, you find yourself surrounded by a thousand women similarly situated, with the bravado of feminine pride and the hysterical contagion of numbers to contribute to your undoing.

All of which means, Betsy, in plain English, that Sara Maydewell, whose name will soon again be Sara Mitchell, has done as the Romans do. And I needn't remind you that the Romans do badly. If they did otherwise, they'd never have been immortalized in a proverb. Do you know of any ultra respectable young ladies' seminary that has? Fame is the most immoral thing I know.

Father Betsy, hear my confession.
Ugh! I have sinned.

I ran across Mrs. Ryerson here—yes, the woman—exactly! (Don't be a fraud, Betsy. Julia will have shown you my letter and you two will have gossiped about it till that cozy little red smoking-room must have blushed for you both.) Well, instead of refusing to be conscious that she could breathe the same atmosphere as I, I fell to fuming inside of me like a merely mortal woman. I ordered gowns from Victoire and proceeded to outshine her here on this squalid little stage.

Do we dress in Sioux Falls? That's all we do do. Oh, I know a decent, demure behavior is fitting during that holy period when one is engaged to be unmarried. But it's pathetic, not contemptible, the way we cling to frocks. It's a last trembling hold, out here in the wilds, upon *les convenances*, the things that were once so sacred.

Then, when she came back from New York with a Tiffany necklace of diamonds from one pretender and an emerald pendant from the other, I felt so like beating Mr. Francis Maydewell that I wished I were still his wife—not five-sixths of a divorcee.

It was in this mood that I answered Templeton Gordon's letter. Do you happen to know from anything he has said or looked whether he considers himself encouraged? If he knows what my wretchedly facetious letter to him meant, he knows more than I do. But I don't like the tone of subsequent epistles of his.

Now, although I had fled the hotel to get away from Mrs. Ryerson, she stopped me on the street, and, before I could freeze her into silence, she had shown me her plunder and told me again that "you can never trust the best of them, and you must make hay while the sun shines"; that while at the theatre with one of her *fiancés* (the one who lacks a month yet of being my full-fledged *ci-dévant*), she was shocked to see in the box across the way her own *ci-dévant*—an embarrassing position, because she posed last summer in Newport as already a divorcee, and her Dakota

residence is supposed to be merely a matter of health-seeking.

Did you ever hear of anything so simple as Francis Maydewell! Positively, I feel criminal in deserting so helpless a baby. Almost he makes me wish I were a Christian—in other words, a believer. Almost he makes me credit his protestations of sinlessness. And how rare it is to find a mortal free from guile! Do you know that the very porter on the train that left Chicago for the West spotted me the moment I said Dakota to the conductor! And don't the boys of Sioux Falls—innocent, righteous cherubs, proper sons of their proper mothers!—pelt with snowballs the newest addition to the colony, crying, "Divorcee! Divorcee!" after her, as though the word were another with a scarlet letter in it, before she has had time to take rooms at the hotel; before she has learned to meet the insolently appraising stare of the drummers who come here to appraise!

How did Mrs. Ryerson get out of her difficulty? How will she choose? Has she chosen? And with all her talk (I'd not dare say this to any one but you, for fear of insulting deductions) is it believable that when a woman's sure of her prey she doesn't know it? And if she isn't sure of success, isn't she sure of failure? And does not the very overloading of her lines argue weakness and lack of skill in landing her fish—an unsportsmanlike willingness to fall back upon Number 2, if the older and bigger fish gets away?

I'm sure I don't know. I only know that she left her baby here with a silly little nurse and not enough money to support the two, and that said nurse threatens to expose the fact that her mistress has played hookey from the Sioux Falls School for Divorcees and has not procured a *bona-fide* residence here—which *exposé* would annul her divorce and any subsequent marriage.

But she has such a complaisant husband that he wouldn't make use of such knowledge. And for me—I told you, did I not, that I don't care whose wife I am or am not. Don't mistake this for a pettish woman's way of saying she

very much cares. I mean only to say, Betsy dear, that the identity of one's second husband is not a matter of vital importance. One knows that there'll be a second; that is enough. One can't really see the sun rise on the Alps twice for the first time.

Don't you scold me, Betsy Underwood. I wasn't in love with Francis Maydewell's wife, but Heaven and Dakota know that the Sioux Falls Sara is as little to my taste. She humiliates me. I thought her an entity, secure in her pride and her resolutions. I find that she shows as fully by her actions the withdrawal of a masculine prop and guard and restraint, as any of the thousand divorcees here, giddy-headed with unaccustomed freedom, like staggering pigeons whose brains have been removed by some surgical operation that leaves them still alive for purposes of scientific observation and psychical research.

Mrs. Underwood, you sinner, allow me to compliment you upon the way you've kept your head—and your husband. We don't bind our feet nor wear iron stays, we modern women—but we marry. A Chinese little-foot belle knows better than to try to walk alone. The seventeenth century marquise never took a full breath in public, nor dreamed that merely removing her portable iron prison would make her chest muscles what they were. But Sara Mitchell handed over her sense of personal responsibility, her temperament, her future, to the keeping of a man, and after the lapse of irresponsible years, during which she was bolstered up by the habit of dependence, all weakened, unarmed, un-self-disciplined, she tottered forth to make of herself a spectacle *pour les dieux et les Dakotas*.

Ah, Betsy, absolve thy SARA.

—
SIOUX FALLS, November 2.
To Mr. James Mitchell.

Life Reserve Building, N. Y.

DEAR FATHER: Your letter surprises me. But so, no doubt, will mine surprise you.

I don't know whether to laugh or to weep at the impertinence of Mr. Francis Maydewell's calling upon you to en-

lighten you about your daughter as revealed by the lady of his last summer's admiration. So it's a shocking state of affair that feminine Number 1 should not even be jealous and distrustful of feminine Number 2, is it? And Mr. Maydewell feels such a post-marital sense of responsibility that he will risk misconception even in the delicate situation in which he is placed, in order to testify to you the kindly feeling he will always have for you and your daughter, however cruelly the latter may have misjudged him, etc., etc.

Oh, there's no danger of the gentleman's being misconceived—not the least. It's such a familiar pose of his. He never actually forbade my associating with his associates. He was only inexpressibly pained by my lack of good taste in caring to do so.

But, just between ourselves, father, I'll plead not guilty to that degenerate lack of shock of which I am accused. I was promptly and properly shocked the moment I knew who she really was. If he were in receipt of such full information from Dakota as he used to be, he'd know that I've cut Mrs. Ryerson dead, and that she looked at me with the mangled bewilderment of an outraged butterfly when we last met.

But now—now I'm almost as fond of her as I was before I knew her. She has done me such a service! Imagine the little feather-head representing me to Mr. Maydewell as a gay, gallus divorcee on excellent terms with the lady who was—who I believed was the cause of all my woe! Nothing in the world could suit me better. Look at its effect upon Mr. Maydewell. I declare I can see him as plainly as though I had been there, asseverating again upon his honor that I am mistaken as to the seriousness of a perfunctory Newport flirtation!

I can see him: what's more, I can believe him—now! How any man could help flirting with that bit of flesh and blood thistledown, Mrs. Ryerson, I cannot imagine—now.

And the reason I can believe it? Well, father, perhaps it's because I want very much to. There! Isn't that a confession? But thanks to Mrs. Ryerson's

nonsensical tale to Mr. Maydewell and Mr. Maydewell's visit to you, I can admit it (to you) with hardly a qualm. These two have made easy what I had made up my mind, before your letter came, might be possible and even probable.

I've not quite done my time, father. I'm not yet a resident of Dakota with all the rights and privileges of citizenship in this great and glorious State. Just the same and nevertheless, I'm coming home to you and—and not with my divorce in my pocket, nor in my trunk, nor even in my mind. I'm just plain coming home. As to Mr. Francis Maydewell, he may draw what inferences he pleases. The climate here may not agree with me and I may need an ocean voyage. How's that? Can you take me across? You won't have to bother

with me long—a week for Francis to hear the news and a week for him to catch up to us at the Italian lakes.

Don't smile in your beard. My coming home all undivorced is surely no more undignified a proceeding than his visit to you. He'll never know that I was longing to do the first, long before he obligingly and mean-spiritedly did the second.

Oh, father dear, I'll be so glad to see you—as glad as I am still to have the right to sign myself

Your loving daughter,

SARA MAYDEWELL.

P. S.—The Dakota residence whose few weeks I can complete at any time—and never shall—will serve as a scarecrow with which to terrify Francis, should he need it—and also Francis' wife.

S.



OLD LETTERS

I READ the yellowed pages o'er and o'er,
By breath of long dead roses faintly stirred;
And, as by magic every written word
Flames sweet and strong with love and life once more.
For here thy heart hath laid its tender store,
And here my waiting soul hath dimly heard
The fluted song of some forgotten bird,
Since Memory's angel paused within my door!

What though thy grass-grown grave hath come between?
What though the reaches of Eternity
Still keep thy lips from mine through slow-shod years?
We learned together all that love may mean!
There is no need of speech 'twixt thee and me;
And yet—Sweetheart! Thy kiss—and then my tears!

MYRTLE REED.

STORIES OF THE STREET

II.—THE MATRIMONY SYNDICATE

By James H. Gannon, Jr.

AMONG the many deals, always spectacular and most times remunerative, engineered through the maze of Wall Street by Joseph W. Barr—the Dick Turpin of Finance, as scandalized financiers insisted him to be—the one of which Barr himself was proudest was that he ever referred to laughingly as the “corner in matrimony.”

The Street called it the “deal in Suburban Trolley,” and ranked it among the lesser accomplishments of the daring Western operator. But Barr, who had a more intimate knowledge and juster appreciation of the details, clung to his “corner in matrimony,” and placed it first.

Perhaps the fact that he shared the glory—and the spoils—with two partners, one of them the only woman, young or old, he ever enthused over, swayed his judgment.

At the beginning of that winter season; the Stock Exchange house of Willis, Barr & Co. had opened a branch office at Palm Beach for the convenience of its customers who were wintering at the Florida resort. John Marshall, whose father had been one of Barr's stanchest friends in the old Chicago days, was transferred from the New York office, where he had been placed by Barr after the father's death, in straitened circumstances, to the Palm Beach branch.

John Marshall, who was always “Young John” to Barr in spite of his six feet of aggressive manhood, had viewed this ostracism with conflicting emotions. While he recognized the op-

portunity presented, under Barr's keen eye, to prove his ability as manager of the office, a stepping-stone to higher place, there were personal reasons, which, however, were not entirely personal, since he believed them to be shared by one other, for which he would gladly have accepted New York, even as a winter resort.

To Palm Beach he went, feeling more or less like a martyr, but the season was hardly under way before he received a convincing proof of the virtue of self-denial. It was in the form of a note, in a wide, mannish hand, from Elizabeth Rogers, the daughter of Morton Rogers, the president of the United Trust Company, and head of the Urban Traction system, announcing her near departure for Palm Beach in company with her mother.

John's thoughts on receipt of the note underwent a series of fluctuations curiously like those of some harassed stock under the manipulation of Joseph W. Barr. And the simile might very happily be extended to the progress of his acquaintance with the banker's daughter.

For Morton Rogers had views as to Elizabeth's future which had so far failed to run parallel with those of John. The president of the United Trust Company, a bulwark of the old school of finance, had opinions of Joseph W. Barr which included, impartially, every one connected with the Western operator.

In his estimation any one who accepted employ with Barr might fairly be regarded as one of the crew of a pirate, ready at the word of command

to scuttle and quite sink the fairest ship afloat on the financial seas. It needed no words from the banker to convey these opinions to any one to whom they were of interest. Mr. Morton Rogers and his opinions were inseparable.

While all this was a matter of regret to John it troubled him less than it might, have had Elizabeth seemed to take a different view of the situation. She was a young woman of riotous independence and determination, who might be counted on, under provocation, to take her father's stubborn will as she had often taken five bars in a flight across country with the hounds.

She accepted the young Westerner frankly as a good comrade. She liked him because he never sawed his mount's mouth into bleeding patches so that she might get in at the death first; he won if he could. He worked earnestly to beat her eighteen up on the links, although it was seldom more than two finally, for her drives and brassie shots were those of a St. Andrews' professional.

For all these things, and many others which she failed utterly to find in the white-faced, nerve-tortured progeny of money kings who were thrown in her way, she liked him, and in a hundred little ways, as a woman will, she told him of the liking.

On the night before his departure for Palm Beach, John had called on Elizabeth, and under the influence of the coming separation had spoken more freely than usual of their plight.

"It's no use, Bess," he said, finally, in mock despair, after they had touched lightly from many sides the parental firmness. "I've got to put through some kind of a deal that will establish me as the Napoleon of Finance, and then I'll win recognition—I don't care about the money."

"I intend to be a syndicate member in that same deal," retorted Elizabeth.

"Yes, it will be a syndicate of two—babes in the financial woods," said John. And they laughed, perhaps, not quite heartily.

As it turned out, however, it was a syndicate of three, and as for the babes

—it is difficult to believe that Joseph W. Barr ever tolerated swaddling clothes of any sort.

Three weeks after the arrival of Mrs. Rogers and Elizabeth at Palm Beach there came an unwelcome telegram from Morton Rogers. The banker was coming for a ten days' visit with his family. It was a message which brought Elizabeth and John, incidentally, to the point of sedition.

Curiously enough, the coming of the banker was coincident with the arrival at the resort of two other financiers, Henry T. Wilson, of Philadelphia, and Andrew F. Raines, of New York. Even more curious, however, was the fact that Messrs. Wilson and Raines were, with Morton Rogers, the important interests in the Urban Traction system.

This coincidence did not escape John, who telegraphed the news of the meeting of the traction men to Willis, Barr & Co. in the firm's cipher, and received an answer bidding him to be alert for developments. So far as John could learn, however, there were no prolonged conferences of the three men, although they were much together in public.

At the end of the appointed ten days the banker left for the North, and on the following day the young people, who had seen little of each other during his visit, shouldered their golf bags, and set out for an afternoon on the links.

When they had holed out on the ninth green, Elizabeth, who had for some time been in the grip of a mood that puzzled John sorely, suggested that they rest for a moment. Once at ease on the soft turf she opened the pocket of her golf bag, and withdrew from it with an air of mystery two little packets. Turning back the sleeves of her jersey, after the recognized canons of legerdemain, she held up the packets before John's wonder-filled eyes.

"I have here in my hands," she began, in the staccato of the variety stage, "two little packages——"

"Has any one in the audience a high hat?" called John, bowing deeply to the amazed caddies, who were pitching pennies near by.

"One of them," continued Elizabeth,

bestowing a withering look on the enthusiastic young man, "is a map of Westchester County, and the other a copy of a telegram sent by Morton Rogers, of the Urban Traction system, to the road's counsel—"

"Whew-oo-o," whistled John, serious this time at least.

"Both of them," went on the girl, in the stogy voice, which was breaking just a little now, "my contribution to the syndicate that is to crown John Marshall as the Young Napoleon of Finance."

"Bess, what in the world do you mean—what does this mean?"

"It means I'm a traitor to my dad. Oh, John, isn't it horrible. But you must promise me one thing. I don't care about your old deals—I want you to get all the glory you can, because—well, just because—but I just insist that you promise not to make dad lose any money."

"I do promise," said John, very earnestly. "I promise even without knowing the consequences—even if I lose the glory."

"That's a good boy. Now you tell me what these things mean. I've puzzled over them for days."

"Why, the map shows the streets and roads of Westchester County—by Jove!—they've marked the line of the Suburban Trolley system in blue, and here's a long, red line from the terminus of the Suburban down Bingham Avenue to—"

"Let's see the telegram, Bess. Um-um. That's right—listen: 'Go ahead with Bingham franchise; (signed)—M. R.'"

"That's it. The Urban is going to get a franchise to lay tracks up Bingham Avenue to connect with the Suburban system—here where the blue line ends, Bess, see? The red line shows where the new road will run."

"That means they're going to buy out the Suburban, either in the open market or from the big holders privately. Maybe they've bought it already—"

"No," broke in the girl, who was looking over his shoulder. "I know they haven't bought it yet. They're

waiting to see how the franchise is coming out. They're asking for it in the name of a fictitious company."

"Bess, I don't know about this. If any one else knew what we know there would be trouble in plenty for the Urban—and your father. It's a pretty dangerous experiment—"

"You promised dad shouldn't lose anything. It's only fame we want, you know."

"Yes, but—by Jove!—I've got it. We'll send for Mr. Barr. We'll tell him frankly just why we want to put through this little deal—if you don't mind his knowing—about you and me, Bess. You know he was an old friend of my father. He'll help us out. He just pines for deals like this. He'll put it through without harming a hair of—anybody's head. You don't mind his knowing, Bess, do you?"

"No-o. Not if you tell him—but that makes three in our syndicate," she added, with a pout.

"But he's only our broker—the syndicate's broker," declared John, laughingly. "Besides, if we went it alone we might end up by ruining your father. Whew-oo-o," and he whistled softly, awe-stricken at this phase of the deal.

Elizabeth's eyes twinkled mischievously as they rested on the woe-begone face of the young man. Then:

"*Sic semper tyrannis*," she whispered, blushing tremendously.

"Bully," cried John—and the waiting caddies set off in high disgust at the unprofessional conduct of these two who pretended to play golf.

Joseph W. Barr tilted back his chair, adjusted his feet comfortably on the opened drawer of his desk, and read for the third time a cipher message which the telegraph clerk of Willis, Barr & Co. had just brought in to him.

"It's from Young John at Palm Beach, Willis," he explained to his partner. "The boy has stumbled into something in connection with Urban Traction, but he's devilish incoherent. Wants to come up here or me to come down

there—'personal,' he says, and 'can't send details by wire.'"

"Why don't you run down to Palm Beach, Mr. Barr? You haven't had a day off in months. Perhaps the boy is lonesome—and he may have some news worth while.

"It'll do you good, anyway," added Willis. "There's nothing doing here just now."

"I'll do it," said Barr, with quick decision. And the same evening found him slipping away to the South.

With some confusion of words but with straightforward manliness, John told Barr the uttermost details of the "syndicate's" scheme. He did not fail to lay bare the real purpose of the deal, nor did he forget to mention his promise to Elizabeth that her father should suffer no actual loss.

He touched this part of his communication so tactfully that the egg-shaped little broker, who had been striving with increasing difficulty to keep countenance, finally broke into a gale of laughter.

John's face grew long. He was half-inclined to be offended at such a reception of his plans. But little by little, as he watched breeze after breeze of mirth sweep his chief, the real humor of the whole situation bore in on him, and he was soon paying laugh for laugh.

"I can't help it, John. Damn—I just can't," cried Barr, mopping up the tears which coursed down his fat cheeks.

"Me—a buccaneer—a pirate—an old Capt. Kidd—butting into a deal as Cupid. And money, money everywhere, and not a solitary white chip for me." And he went off into another spasm with John in close pursuit.

For some minutes Barr rocked back and forth softly, now and then breaking into a little reminiscent ripple of laughter. Finally, however, he was sitting quietly, huddled into a little ball of humanity with eyes that were all but closed. Through those narrow slits Barr had time and again followed the tortuous moves of the pieces on the

chessboard of the Street to the foredoomed and bitter "mate."

The eyes opened at last, shining with good will, and a fat, friendly hand went out to John.

"Young John," said the little broker, quietly, "you've got to have that girl; she's worthy your father's son. We'll put this thing through so ship-shape that old Rogers will be proud of both of you. For we'll buy the Suburban for him cheaper than he could get it himself; and I'll gamble he'll be a friend of mine, too, when it's all over. Now, that's enough of that. I want you to take me out and introduce me to the girl."

They found Elizabeth hidden away in a corner of the big piazza. She arose to meet them, and John began, a bit diffidently:

"This is Mr. Barr, Bess—Miss Rogers—"

"The syndicate's broker, Miss Rogers," interrupted Barr, with such a severely professional air that both the girl and John forgot the little awkwardness of the situation, and laughed heartily with the little man.

When John left them a few minutes later they were deep in a discussion of the value of various girth cinches for cross-country work.

An hour passed, and Barr, arrayed in knickerbockers and a very jaunty golf cap, bustled into John's office.

"Where are your golf sticks, John?" He was almost breathless from his haste. "We've just time for eighteen holes before sunset."

"I'm sorry," began John, "but I've got these accounts to fix up—"

"Nobody's asked you to go," said Barr, grimly, grabbing the golf bag. "I've got to attend to some details of the syndicate matter with Miss Rogers. Does this cap look all right? Had to borrow it of the bell boy."

"Straight now—is it O. K.?" queried the little man, anxiously, pushing the cap from one ear to the other in an excess of zeal.

"It's fine," laughed John. "You look like the Sultan of Sulu. By Jove! I'm getting jealous, I am."

"You'd better be," panted Barr. And John watched him hurry away to meet Elizabeth on the lawn. He made a sweeping bow, with the little cap in hand, to the laughing girl, and they passed from sight.

Barr came in to John at dinner that night all aglow with the exercise of the game.

"She beat me one up," he said, ruefully, as he solicitously tucked the napkin in around the expanse of linen exposed by his dinner coat. "One up—and by a girl, too; don't you ever tell that to John Willis—or her dad. I tell you, John, I feel like a new man. I'm half inclined to reform; to mend my wicked ways. If I thought there was one chance in a million of finding that fountain of youth that Ponce de Leon looked for around here I'd do it, too. I'd get in the running with you. But you can't teach an old dog new tricks, and I guess I'll have to stick by the old ones. We've got the black flag covered with white this trip, though, and we're going to make a swift voyage, and a rich one, for the girl and you—and I'll have my fun out of it.

"Damn—I'd like to bring up alongside that treasure ship of old Rogers cleared for action—um—um—'thirteen men on a dead man's chest'— But we've promised, John, we've promised to be good. How I wish your dad could have lived to see that girl!

"Well, I'll just hang around here for a few days to get this moral tone cinched—I'd be afraid to trust myself just yet around Wall Street with all this Urban dynamite in my clothes—and then I'll sail North under the white flag. I'll wigwag you in to the finish."

"It's the most inexplicable thing, Mr. Rogers," declared the perplexed counsel of the Urban Traction Company to the banker. "Here not ten days ago the Tammany people practically assured me that there would not be the slightest difficulty in getting the Bingham Avenue franchise through—at the usual rates, of course—and now they're worse

than lukewarm; they seem positively against the franchise."

"Perhaps it is a question of more money?" hazarded the banker.

"No, I think not. I suggested the possibility of an increased campaign contribution, but it did no good. I fear, just a bit, there is some scheme under way to take advantage of the thing themselves; perhaps the Suburban people have learned our plans, and are trying to forestall us?"

"It's not that," declared the banker. "I think you'll find the gang is simply holding us up, as usual. As for the Suburban, I'm more than ever convinced that we were wise to put off buying the stock in the market until the franchise was settled. You'd better keep up the negotiations with the Tammany people a while longer before applying openly for the franchise. They'll come around with a proposition of some kind, probably."

But the Urban counsel could make no headway with the Tammany people. They were playing the game as it had been planned out for them by their good friend Joseph W. Barr, whose sterling qualities as a plunger at the race meets had endeared him to a score of powerful district leaders who frequented the tracks. To them, and particularly to P. J. Milligan, who held the city below Fourteenth Street in the hollow of his itching palm, Barr had outlined a course in regard to the franchise which satisfied each desire.

In the meantime, Barr had started his campaign for the control of the Suburban Trolley Company. The company's capital was twenty million dollars, and the stock was selling in the market at ninety dollars a share, on the dividends of four per cent. paid by the road. To control the company it was therefore necessary to obtain something over one hundred thousand shares, which at market prices meant a cost of over nine million dollars.

It was no part of Barr's plan to pay any such sum for the stock. His careful investigation of the financial condition of the Suburban convinced him that the stock could be put down to a figure

where the one hundred thousand shares should cost little more than eight million dollars, and of this amount eighty per cent., or six million four hundred thousand dollars, could be borrowed on the stock purchased. He had promised John that the road should be bought much cheaper than the Urban would have been compelled to pay, and it was a matter of professional pride to even exceed this promise.

The inquiries into the Suburban's affairs had disclosed such a decided loss in earnings through competition of a recent extension of the elevated system, that a reduction of the four per cent. dividend was inevitable at the approaching dividend meeting of the directors. This, of course, would assist in putting down the stock to seventy-five, where Barr coolly determined it should go.

In addition, the little man, whose sources of information were a matter of amazement, had discovered that the president of the Suburban, who was also one of the largest individual stockholders, was the head of a brewery which was teetering on the edge of bankruptcy; a fact which, in connection with a brewery, startled Barr even more than the unfortunate president's name, which was Schlimbinger.

To bolster up his brewery President Schlimbinger had borrowed money on his forty thousand shares of Suburban stock from two trust companies. He had borrowed to the last cent, and Barr smiled softly at the pleasing prospect of "shaking out" the forty thousand shares when Suburban tumbled.

With these facts in his possession, Barr had commissioned various brokers in his employ to pick up Suburban stock at the "market," which meant the prevailing price of ninety. He intended to "average down" this price later by purchases at lower figures. This preliminary move netted him some six thousand shares, and then he put under way a raid on all the traction group of stocks, which served the double purpose of depressing Suburban and yet of concealing the real movement against it.

The raid on the tractions began on Monday, three weeks after Barr's re-

turn from Palm Beach. It was accompanied by many lurid stories of antagonistic measures to be taken by the municipal authorities regarding franchises, collections of back taxes, suits to compel big expenditures for changes of motive power to electricity, and other inventions calculated to bring dismay to holders of traction stocks.

And all these fables, by the grace of P. J. Milligan, were backed up by the expressive silence of the Tammany city authorities.

Through these stories, and by the sheer impact of the thousands of shares of traction stocks hurled at a frightened market, Barr drove prices down notch by notch, until on Wednesday all the tractions were away off. The usually sedate Urban had lost four points, and Suburban, the object of the drive, had fallen eight points, dropping from ninety to eighty-two in three days, while the little man's brokers gathered in sixteen thousand shares.

On Thursday morning, as Barr had foreseen, the Suburban directors met, and reduced the dividend on the company's stock from four to two per cent. On the floor of the Exchange, following this announcement, an avalanche of traction stocks, loosened from their moorings by Barr, struck the market, and the entire group fluttered toward lower figures like a mammoth balloon despoiled of its gas.

Barr was hovering over the ticker in his inner office, mopping his face as usual, when the announcement came of the Suburban dividend cut. He scanned the tape until it printed off a three-point drop in the stock, and then clapping his hat on his head he made his way down Broad Street to the offices of President Schlimbinger, of the Suburban Trolley Company.

Once in the presence of that harassed German gentleman he came straight to the point.

"Some clients of our house, Mr. Schlimbinger, have commissioned us to try to get your holdings of Suburban Trolley. I don't know that you care to sell, and I tried to tell them that I didn't think too much of the stock as a pur-

are at present at No. 37 East —fifth Street; and I am Henry Gerald Leslie, very much at your service, and not at all married to any one."

"Indeed!" said Miss Ferguson, with icy civility. "Then will you kindly explain Jemima?"

"My Cousin Jimmy, otherwise Jim, otherwise Jem, otherwise Jemima, otherwise James Ellison, Esquire, of the New York Stock Exchange, and the best old chap going anywhere."

It was Miss Ferguson's turn to subside into an armchair a prey to helpless mirth.

"Oh, no!" she cried. "It's much too good to be true. My beloved aunt, how will you bear the shock of learning that I have been dining alone at Jimmy Ellison's with a total stranger?"

"What a bit of a world it is!" said Leslie. "Why, your friend must be old George's wife; fancy having 'em neighbors. I'll look them up. Hello, though, what's he done with number one? I thought her name was Rose?"

"So it is," agreed Miss Ferguson, still laughing, "Jemima Rose, after a great aunt who left a fortune. I only found out by accident, and used the name to tease her, as she confessed her husband did; she also explained that they were the best of friends, though they were seldom together, perhaps she said 'because.' And now, Mr. Leslie, there is only one thing more." She commanded her features and looked at him gravely, in spite of the quiver in her soft voice. "I know it's awfully rash, but I am a daughter of Eve, and I can't help it. *Who* was Jemima's Nelly?"

Leslie hung his head, with all the appearance of detected guilt.

"You see, I was in rather a hole, so I—I—in fact, I consulted Akers; and, mind you, I've no doubt he was quite off the scent, but he—well—he had a sort of notion about a certain Miss—Miss Nelly Montague."

Miss Ferguson went into another peak of laughter.

"What!" she cried. "The girl with the green orchid? Oh, dear, oh, dear, how disappointed you must have been

when I wouldn't even give a hand-spring. Come, now," she said, teasingly, "when did it begin to dawn on you that perhaps I wasn't Miss Montague, after all?"

Leslie drew himself up.

"Miss Ferguson," he began, a trifle stiffly, "if you think me such an infernal bounder—" He caught her smile, flushed, and broke off. "I'm an awful ass, but I can't bear to have you compare yourself to such a woman, even in jest."

Miss Ferguson shook her head.

"Ah," she said, "that is a masculine standpoint. I'm not sure if we want you to change, but it isn't the position for another woman to take. However, it's too late for ethical discussions; we must find out what the blizzard is doing, and how I'm going home. You see, I hadn't the courage to ask for Jenkins and the horses on such a night, and it's an open question whether my cabby ever returns, and if so, where."

"I'll undertake to get you back all right," said Leslie, cheerfully. "Let's have a look at the weather."

He walked to the window, jerked the curtains apart, and clattered open the inner shutters.

"Hello!" he cried, in astonished accents, and she moved lightly to his side, and looked out into the wonder of the night.

The wind had dropped, the storm was over, the sparkling air seemed made of diamond dust; high in the glittering heavens rode the full-orbed silver moon, while far below lay the city, its myriad lights gleaming like jewels amid the shining purity of the new-fallen snow.

Akers was obliged to give three coughs, of varying discretion, before either of the pair turned around.

"If you please, miss," he said, severely, when he had at last attracted Miss Ferguson's attention, "your keb."

"That's a comfort," she cried. "Old Jones is a man of his word. Now, Mr. Leslie, I must be off at once; it's a glorious night, but I fancy one don't appreciate it so much on the box."

"Sharp's the word," said Leslie, following her downstairs. "Here, Akers,

send Susan along. Oh, she's there, eh? And, Akers, see that there are no avalanches in front."

"I've 'ad the steps swept," said Akers, as he assisted Leslie into his coat, with lofty tolerance.

Indeed, when Miss Ferguson emerged she found the steps not only swept but also garnished by a red carpet, down which Leslie escorted her to the carriage.

"Where to?" he asked; and she held out her hand as she gave the address.

"Good-night, Mr. Leslie, I've had a delightful evening."

"Me, too," said Leslie. "But you haven't seen the last of me yet. I'm coming with you." And he was quite unmoved by Miss Ferguson's protestations.

"That's all right," he declared, coolly, "but you aren't going to lose your way again, while I'm here to see after you." Without further ado he jumped in beside her, and firmly slammed the door.

Old Jones cracked the whip, and the carriage got slowly under way; so slowly, indeed, that the driver of another vehicle just behind, drew up with a jerk, to avoid a collision. The occupant of the second cab stuck his head from the window. He was a stout gentleman, of cheerful and rubicund countenance, his hat cocked to the side, and a cigarette in his mouth.

"Next door, you idiot," shouted the stout gentleman; but at the same moment his eye fell on the red carpet and the retreating carriage, and in a jiffy he skipped out of his cab, missed his footing, and sat down in the middle of a snowdrift, wildly waving.

"Here, hi, hello!" bellowed the stout gentleman. "It's Jemima! Come back, you people, and have supper."

But it was too late, the fugitives were already out of earshot. The carriage rattled along the street, turned the corner up the avenue, and disappeared into the night.



THE CATHEDRAL OF MILAN

THERE is a Gothic miracle in stone;
 Fair Milan holds it in her conscious heart;
 As though the work of archangelic art—
 Not man's—it soars to God, sheer and alone!
 Yet mark! With stain of centuries o'ergrown,
 The lower courses of that temple start,
 But whiten upward, till its spires, apart,
 Flower in mid-heaven, like lilies freshly blown!

Such is the tabernacle of man's soul,
 Thus was it framed—the fabric once how fair!
 Then, as brute tide and seasons round it roll,
 World-stains have gathered on it unaware;
 But still the primal thought pursues its goal,
 And blooms in candor, in the upper air!

EDITH M. THOMAS.

BY THE KITCHEN DOOR

By Lucy Morris

"SO," said Marie Wentworth, holding the letter at arm's length, and contemplating it with lips puckered in pretty imitation of her favorite professor, whose distinctive mannerism she had unscrupulously appropriated.

Her eyes narrowed to the concentrated gaze which precedes a decision, but even an amateur physiognomist would have felt safe in declaring that the politely stereotyped phrases in which the superintendent of the Brinton public schools regretted that he had secured a teacher before receiving Miss Wentworth's application awakened no answering regret in the rejected young woman.

"And that enthusiastically fictitious enumeration of my qualifications gone for nought," she murmured, as the letter fell unheeded to the floor at the combined gesture of shoulder and hand which has come to mean acceptance of the inevitable.

"No one can accuse me of having made no effort to secure conventional employment," she was explaining half an hour later to her college chum, who was advancing violent expostulations across a half-packed trunk.

"I'm not asking your advice, you know, so you needn't feel it your duty to get worried and didactic, Stella," she informed her perturbed friend. "But I thought you'd like to know my future address. This is it, provided the author of this interesting 'ad' and I are mutually pleasing. There was a lovely long list of desolated households from which to choose. For a moment I did incline to one promising a 'good home' and a 'kind mistress,' but decided some-

thing with less protestation might wear better."

"You aren't in earnest. It's only a joke," exclaimed Stella, with a relieved smile deprecating her former stupidity.

"Indeed, it isn't," and this time there was no lightness of tone to mislead her friend. "The time has come for me to stand by my convictions. I'm going out to service. I'm going to be a cook. Haven't I studied economics and social problems for the better part of four years? Haven't I advanced theory after theory as to their solution, and isn't it only fair that I should try some of my own prescriptions? 'The servant girl problem'—I quote from my admirable thesis on the subject—'can be solved only by the recognition of domestic work as an honorable profession demanding a special education, an adaptation of science to practical daily needs, and the recruiting of women of intelligence and refinement to the ranks.'"

With an elaborate gesture, Marie indicated her appropriation of the intelligent and refined designation to herself. Then she continued, more soberly:

"I'm not saying but that if various school superintendents had been more like Barkus, I should not have become a pedagogue without expostulation, though I know I should have loathed the work. Cooking I know and like. It's a matter of money with me, too. I can't live on my relatives, waiting for something to turn up after the expenses of four years at college. Besides, while they have always been nice, an avuncular bond isn't quite the most satisfying substitute for the nearer ties most girls have. And I've figured it up that a

cook at five dollars a week and her board gets a bigger salary than many of the girls who have just graduated will for their first year's teaching."

Stella was left unconvinced, but bribed to secrecy for the "protection of the feelings of unenlightened relatives and friends."

Mrs. Clarence Lane was distinctly disconcerted by the appearance of the cook who presented herself the next day. There was nothing remarkable, it is true, in the black wool skirt or silk waist which gowned the slender figure, nor in the small black hat which fitted snugly over slightly waving brown hair, but they possessed a style seldom seen on an applicant for domestic service. The hands looked strong, though white and shapely. Marie had discarded rings and gloves as prejudicial to her success as a position seeker.

"You are a cook?" asked Mrs. Lane, only partially successful in her well-bred effort to conceal surprise.

"I want to be, madam. I have never had a position, but I am a graduate of a cooking school, and feel sure I could do the work."

Now that the much-planned-for interview was at hand, Marie felt as if she were an actress in some preposterous play, but she spoke her lines with the earnestness and conviction that characterize the capable actress. She told consistently the little fable she had manufactured of her antecedent history, the usual, colorless country-girl-stranger-in-a-large-city sort. It would clearly be impolitic, she had decided, to confide theories to a prospective mistress whose sympathies for scientific investigation were yet undiscovered country.

When her turn for questioning came, the businesslike manner in which she dispatched the usual inquiries called forth mingled amazement and admiration from the woman whose employ she was seeking to enter. There were a second girl and a coachman, she learned, and the family consisted of Mrs. Lane and her husband and a grown-up son, then away. Her bedroom on the third floor had possibilities of coziness, she discovered, and she was to be allowed

the use of a small room off the kitchen for callers, of whom, she explained with an amused smile, she should probably have none, as she was without acquaintance in the city. On Wednesday, which was her afternoon "out," she need not return to get dinner.

During the pause in which Marie was wondering if this situation offered all the advantages she had so often advocated in her impersonal study of the question, Mrs. Lane found herself hanging with the most unaccountable anxiety on the girl's decision, and it was with a feeling of elation that she saw Marie depart to order her trunk, which she had left at the station pending the result of her expedition.

"She's unlike any cook I ever saw," she told her husband, as they sat down to dinner that night, "but I think she's going to prove a treasure. I can't help wondering about her, though. She seems too good to be true."

"There you go," expostulated Mr. Lane, looking with satisfaction over the daintily set table, the skillfully cooked steak and the well-seasoned creamed potatoes, the substantial menu he liked. He had suffered from the frequent defection of cooks, and the present prospect was fair from a prandial viewpoint. "Don't let's question the gifts the gods send us, Molly. Don't be fussy, and don't bother her. Give her anything under the roof she wants, except my toothbrush, provided she will stay. This is the best meal I have eaten in six months."

To this masculine idea of the proper treatment of servants, an idea advanced upon the advent of every new incumbent of the kitchen, Mrs. Lane made no reply.

Her husband was in a better position to understand her bewilderment, however, when, half an hour later, in passing through the kitchen to the stables, he encountered over the dishpan a flushed face under a tumbled wave of brown hair. A white collar at the neck of the black waist opened to show a graceful throat, and the bare arms protruding from the dish water were irreproachable in their firm contour.

"Deuced fetching costume our new cook wears," was the form his impressions took in comment to his wife. "Rather a good thing, isn't it, that Dick is away from home?"

At first Marie found the novelty of this departure from beaten paths as pleasurable as anticipated. Park Avenue could not display another such kitchen, Mrs. Lane was wont to declare, to whom the cleanliness, orderliness, and, above all, convenience of "modern methods" were a revelation and a joy. Her consideration and good-heartedness, together with Marie's dignity and reticence, kept all servility out of their relations. It was always, "Mary"—Marie had been modified by the girl into the more homely appellation for culinary purposes—"will you do so and so?" Never an unqualified command.

As far as the actual work of the kitchen went, Marie's enthusiasm never flagged. She felt more satisfaction over an exquisitely prepared dinner than over any commendation she had received in college. While deploring to herself the fact that her convictions outran her courage, she had insisted that the kitchen limit the field of her industry. There she had the impersonality of the *deus ex machina*, but tradition was so strong upon her that she could not bear to display herself in a subordinate position before Mrs. Lane's frequent guests, people not improbably less cultured than herself.

To escape the pitfall of mental stagnation, she made it a point to see all the good plays, always alone save for a unique and diverting instance when she took Jennie, the second girl, to a Maeterlinck mystery. A near neighbor had once come to Mrs. Lane with the amazing statement that she had seen the latter's cook at an Ibsen play, but the report was discredited. Taking your pleasures "*sola*" divides them by considerably more than half, however, as Marie soon found to her unhappiness.

"If only you and Nan and Christine were 'lady helps' in the neighboring mansions and we could get together for our old laughs at the world and its

follies," she wrote to Stella, "it wouldn't be half bad. Or if I were so constituted that I could *pirouette* happily at the policeman's ball, a prospect which is making life magnificently worth living just now to Jennie, whose exhilarating society is the compass of my social circle! I do get lonely, but am not yet regretful."

It was during an acute attack of the recurrent loneliness that, walking in a fashionable district for the frankly avowed purpose of just looking at people, Marie saw approach a familiar figure. It wore a well-fitting gray suit and was topped with a straw hat of proper pattern, and when, after a quick, half-doubtful glance of recognition, it advanced with outstretched hand, she could have sobbed with delight at encountering a friendly human being out of her forsaken past.

"Miss Wentworth! I didn't know you were in the city," exclaimed the pleasant voice.

"Nor I you," she answered, unsteadily. Then, her vivid smile signaling her recovery of the self-possession from which she had been surprised, "I hope you are half as glad to see me as I am to see you. Yours is actually the first familiar face I have come upon in my two months here."

"Let's go in here, where I can relate my happiness over a cup of chocolate," was the suggestion.

There was no place for thought of the unwonted appearance of a cook in a fashionable tearoom or of all the other incongruities to which she had been making such brave and persistent efforts to adjust herself, in a mind given over to memory of a junior "prom" at which this straight, athletic young person had been the most frequent of partners. The rapid fire of reminiscences and questions about common acquaintances left Marie no time to prepare for the inevitable question, "Are you visiting here, Miss Wentworth?"

She made a mental dash at a presentable occupation to justify her presence, and grasped at teaching as the least likely to induce further questioning. But his next demand:

"You must tell me where you are living. I want to show my gratitude to chance by not losing sight of you again," pressed her hard.

A vision of this young aristocrat humbly inquiring for her at the kitchen door and spending the evening in the little room beyond the pantry, was too severe an assault on her gravity and she choked in the chocolate she was drinking to gain time for her imagination. But it was obviously a *cul de sac* and her distress took the form of a pathetic, "Oh, but you can't."

The eyes which had been smiling with such friendliness upon her became remote and strange. There was a courteous:

"Pardon my presumption. I had taken it for granted—unwarrantably, it seems—that our pleasure at meeting was mutual."

"Mr. Garth, you mustn't—" with an impulsive hand on his arm. "Indeed, it isn't that, but—"

Admirable moment for the confession which never once occurred to her.

"It's this way," she appealed to his grave silence, pursuing the course of prevarication with a determination worthy of a better lie. "I board with an old maid with an unquenchable thirst for the romance which has passed her by, and"—she hesitated, and had the grace to blush vividly—"it is so silly, but she imagines that every man who comes to see me wants to marry me."

"And there are so many of them that she suspects you of polygamous intentions?" in a tone showing symptoms of appeasableness.

"Oh, no," was the emphatic protest, "but she is a sort of cousin, and the relationship gives her privileges, she feels, which makes pleasant living with her contingent upon her knowing as little as possible about you."

"I actually believe that I would rather risk the preposterous matrimonial interpretation than not see you again," said Gerald Garth, the inference from his pretty speech being that he found the explanation flimsy.

"My time is dreadfully taken up, but

next Wednesday couldn't you meet me at three at the Carleton galleries? I haven't seen the new pictures," was Marie's compromise.

"I could and will," said her companion; "but it's a long time."

That night there were tears in Mrs. Lane's dishpan. Her cook was realizing in all its bitterness the social isolation to which her often-quoted convictions had condemned her. Even the advent of Dick Lane, a clever-looking young fellow, upon whose appearance and disposition she had been wont to bestow some girlish speculation, failed to lighten with a glow of interest the deep gloom in which she was submerged.

In spite of reason and the certainty of a disastrous ending to her mad career of deceit, the *ennui* of the two months of service drove Marie to an acceptance of the agreeable present with a purposeful disregard of all time to come. The inspection of the pictures was followed by matinées, excursions to the parks, cozy little dinners, the downtown meeting place being insisted on and the meetings, other than on Wednesdays, frequently terminated much too soon for a certain, self-willed young man to whom the old maid cousin—an overworked excuse—began to take on the lineaments of a bugbear. All invitations for the evening were persistently refused, menacing as they did the jealously guarded secret of her abiding place.

"I've got to get out of this," was the girl's final decision. "I've got to give notice here," she smiled whimsically, "and I've got to hunt up that terrible old spinster I've manufactured, and live with her as I told him I did. Oh, I'm a coward to shirk the results of my theories, but I can't give the other up."

It was not to be decided quite that way, however. Jennie took it upon herself to leave an hour before a dinner party Mrs. Lane was giving for Dick. The poor hostess went to Marie in tears. Even in this emergency she did not ask the girl to go into the dining-room, but with the memory of all the fair treat-

ment she had had from this woman, Marie had, in less than a moment, characterized her scruples as priggish, and sent Mrs. Lane to dress for her guests with the assurance that everything would be all right. Although she had made light of it, it was a very real sacrifice, the edge of which was not at all dulled by the statement of her looking-glass that the white cap and apron made of her an uncommonly attractive waitress.

With the intention of doing a disagreeable thing gracefully, she took her place at the host's elbow, only to find herself looking into the astonished face of Gerald Garth. Her blood seemed to burn her in its swift dash for her face, but she had an indistinct notion that she must hold her head high at any cost, which saved her from any other sign of embarrassment. Indeed, a haughtier young person never condescended to dispense viands than Mrs. Lane's cook that evening. She had determined to show this man that she at least knew her business thoroughly, and not an awkward gesture or unanticipated want marred the perfection of the service. Once or twice unavoidably she caught Gerald's eyes, and there was in them an expression which, under less tragic

circumstances, she would have called amusement.

The next day was the longest and most miserable of her life. The food was either under or overdone and ill-seasoned for the first time during her incumbency, but not a word of criticism was uttered. Mrs. Lane had a dim idea that something was wrong, and with rare discretion took no notice.

At half-past seven Marie wiped the dish water from her hands to answer a knock at the kitchen door.

"Is the cook in?" asked a demure voice, but the fun in a pair of gray eyes was unmistakable.

"Gerald," she said, softly, and a moment later Mrs. Lane's cook was following in the footsteps of all cooks, and being kissed at the kitchen door.

"But, Marie," objected one of the occupants of a kitchen chair a bit later, "considering that my education was along much the same lines as yours, don't you think I might have been trusted to understand this social problem of yours?"

"I was so desperately afraid you wouldn't, dear, I didn't dare risk it."

"Well, let's hunt up that fabulous cousinly monster, and tell her that for once her suspicions were correct."



HOME

EACH morning brings its stirring thought;
Each day its meed of care and fret;
But past the twilight barriers waits
The little season to forget.

There is the quiet House of Sleep,
Where all the thralls go free once more;
Put by the dusty shoes of Care
And pass, in peace, its open door!

ARTHUR KETCHUM.

THE DUEL

By E. Nesbit

Author of "The Brute," "The Force of Habit," "The Red House," Etc.

"BUT I wasn't doing any harm," she urged, piteously.

She looked like a child just going to cry.

"He was holding your hand."

"He wasn't—I was holding his. I was telling him his fortune. And, anyhow, it's not your business."

She had remembered this late and phrased it carelessly.

"It is my Master's business," said he.

She repressed the retort that touched her lips. After all, there was something fine about this man, who, in the first month of his ministrations as parish priest, could actually dare to call on her, the richest and most popular woman in the district, and accuse her of—well, most people would hardly have gone so far as to call it flirting. Propriety only knew what the Rev. Christopher Casilis might be disposed to call it.

They sat in the pleasant fire-lit drawing-room looking at each other.

"He's got a glorious face," she thought. "Like a Greek god—or a Christian martyr! I wonder whether he's ever been in love."

He thought, "She is abominably pretty. I suppose beauty is a temptation!"

"Well," she said, impatiently, "you've been very rude indeed and I've listened to you. Is your sermon quite done? Have you any more to say? Or shall I give you some tea?"

"I have more to say," he answered, turning his eyes from hers. "You are beautiful, and young, and rich—you have a kind heart—oh, yes—I've heard little things in the village already. You are a born general. You organize better than any woman I ever knew—though

it's only dances, and picnics, and theatricals, and concerts. You have great gifts. You could do great work in the world—and you throw it all away—you give your life to the devil's dance you call pleasure. Why do you do it?"

"Is that your business, too?" she asked again.

And again he answered:

"It is my Master's business."

Had she read his words in a novel they would have seemed to her priggish, unnatural and superlatively impertinent. Spoken by those thin, perfectly curved lips they were at least interesting.

"That wasn't what you began about," she said, twisting the rings on her fingers. The catalogue of her gifts and graces was less a novelty to her than the reproaches to her virtue.

"No—am I to repeat what I began about? Ah, but I will. I began by saying what I came here to say; that you, as a married woman, have no right to turn men's heads and make them long for what can never be."

"But you don't know," she said. "My husband—"

"I don't wish to know," he interrupted. "Your husband is alive, and you are bound to be faithful to him, in thought, word and deed. What I saw and heard in the little copse last night—"

"I do wish you wouldn't," she said. "You talk as if—"

"No," he said, "I'm willing—even anxious, I think—to believe that you would not—could not—"

"Oh," she cried, jumping up, "this is intolerable! How dare you?"

He had risen, too.

"I'm not afraid of you," he said. "I'm not afraid of your anger—nor of your—your other weapons. Think what you are—think of your great powers—and you are wasting them all in making fools of a pack of young idiots!"

"But what could I do with my gifts—as you call them?"

"Do?—why you could endow and organize and run any one of a hundred schemes for helping on God's work in the world."

"For instance?" Her charming smile enraged him.

"For instance? Well—for instance—you might start a home for those women who began as you have begun, and who have gone down into hell, as you will go—unless you let yourself be warned."

She was, for the moment, literally speechless. Then she remembered how he had said:

"I am not afraid of—your weapons." She drew a deep breath and spoke gently:

"I believe you don't mean to be insulting—I believe you mean kindly to me. Please say no more now. I'll think over it all. I'm not angry—only—do you really think you understand everything?"

He might have answered that he did not understand her. She did not mean him to understand. She knew well enough that she was giving him something to puzzle over when she smiled that beautiful, troubled, humble, appealing half smile.

He did not answer at all. He stood a moment twisting his soft hat in his hands; she admired his hands very much.

"Forgive me if I've pained you more than was needed," he said, at last, "it is only because——" Here her smile caught him, and he ended vaguely in a decreasing undertone. She heard the words "king's jewels," "pearl of great price."

When he was gone she said "*Well!*" more than once. Then she ran to the low mirror over the mantelpiece and looked earnestly at herself.

"You do look rather nice to-day," she

said. "And he's not afraid of any of your weapons! And I'm not afraid of any of his. It's a fair duel. Only all the provocation came from him—so the choice of weapons is mine. And they shall be *my* weapons; he has weapons to match them right enough, only the poor dear doesn't know it." She went away to dress for dinner, humming gayly:

"My love has breath o' roses,
O' roses, o' roses,
And arms like lily posies
To fold a lassie in!"

Not next day—she was far too clever for that, but on the day after that he received a note. Her handwriting was charming, no extravagances, every letter soberly but perfectly formed.

"I have been thinking of all you said the other day. You are quite mistaken about some things—but in some you are right. Will you show me how to work? I will do whatever you tell me."

Then the Rev. Christopher was glad of the courage that had inspired him to denounce to his parishioners all that seemed amiss in them.

"I am glad," he said to himself, "that I had the courage to treat her exactly as I have done the others—even if she *has* beautiful hair and eyes like—like——"

He stopped the thought before he found the simile—not because he imagined that there could be danger in it, but because he had been trained to stop thoughts of eyes and hair as neatly as a skillful boxer stops a blow.

She had not been so trained, and she admired his eyes and hair quite as much as he might have admired hers if she had not been married.

So now the Rev. Christopher had a helper in his parish work, and he needed help, for his plain speaking had already offended half his parish. And his helper was, and as he had had the sense to know she could be, the most accomplished organizer in the county. She ran the parish library, she arranged the school treat, she started evening classes for wood carving and art needle-

work. She spent money like water, and time as freely as money.

Quietly, persistently, relentlessly, she was making herself necessary to the Rev. Christopher. He wrote to her every day—there were so many instructions to give—but he seldom spoke with her. When he called she was never at home. Sometimes they met in the village and exchanged a few sentences. She was always gravely sweet, intensely earnest. There was a certain smile which he remembered—a beautiful, troubled, appealing smile. He wondered why she smiled no more.

Her friends shrugged their shoulders over her new fancy.

"It is odd," her bosom friend said. "It can't be the parson, though he's as beautiful as he can possibly be, because she sees next to nothing of him. And yet I can't think that Betty of all people could really—"

"Oh, I don't know," said the bosom friend of her bosom friend. "Women often do take to that sort of thing, you know, when they get tired of—"

"Of?"

"The other sort of thing, don't you know?"

"How horrid you are!" said Betty's bosom friend. "I believe you're a most dreadful cynic, really."

"Not at all," said the friend, complacently stroking his mustache.

Betty certainly was enjoying herself. She had the great gift of enjoying, thoroughly, any new game. She enjoyed, first, the newness, and, besides, the hidden lining of her new masquerade dress enchanted her. But, as her new industries developed she began to enjoy the things for themselves. It is always delightful to do what we can do well, and the Rev. Christopher had been right when he said she was a born general.

"How easy it all is," she said, "and what a fuss those clergy hags make about it! What a wife I should be for a bishop." She smiled and sighed.

It was pleasant, too, to wake in the morning, not to the recollection of the particular stage which yesterday's flirtation happened to have reached, but to

the sense of some difficulty overcome, some object achieved, some rough place made smooth for her Girls Friendly, or her wood carvers, or her *Parish Magazine*. And within it all the secret charm of a purpose transfiguring with its magic this eager, strenuous, working life.

Her avoidance of the Rev. Christopher struck him at first as modest, discreet, and in the best possible taste. But presently it seemed to him that she rather overdid it. There were many things he would have liked to discuss with her. But she always evaded talk with him. Why? He began to ask himself why. And the question wormed through his brain more and more searchingly. He had seen her at work now; he knew her powers and her graces—the powers and the graces that made her the adored of her friendly girls and her carving boys. He remembered, with hot ears and neck crimson above his clerical collar that interview. The things he had said to her! How could he have done it? Blind idiot that he had been! And she had taken it all so sweetly, so nobly, so humbly. She had only needed a word to turn her from the frivolities of the world to better things. It need not have been the sort of word he had used. And at a word she had turned. That it should have been at *his* word was not perhaps a very subtle flattery; but the Rev. Christopher swallowed it and never tasted it. He was not trained to distinguish the flavors of flatteries. He never tasted it, but it worked in his blood—for all that. And why, why, why would she never speak to him? Could it be that she was afraid that he would speak to her now as he had once spoken? He blushed again.

Next time he met her she was coming up to the church with a big basket of flowers for the altar. He took the basket from her and carried it in.

"Let me help you," he said.

"No," she said, in that sweet, simple grave way of hers. "I can do it very well. Indeed, I would rather."

He had to go. The arrangement of the flowers took more than an hour, but

when she came out with the empty basket, he was waiting on the porch. Her heart gave a little joyful jump.

"I want to speak to you," said he.

"I'm rather late," she said, as usual, "couldn't you write?"

"No," he said, "I can't write this. Sit down a moment on the porch."

She loved the masterfulness of his tone. He stood before her.

"I want you to forgive me for speaking to you as I did—once. I'm afraid you're afraid that I shall behave like that again. You needn't be."

"Score number one," she said to herself. Aloud she said:

"I am not afraid," and she said it sweetly, seriously.

"I was wrong," he went on, eagerly. "I was terribly wrong. I see it quite plainly now. You do forgive me—don't you?"

"Yes," said she, soberly, and sighed.

There was a little silence. Her serious eyes watched the way of the wind dimpling the tall, feathery grass that grew above the graves.

"Are you unhappy?" he asked. "You never smile now."

"I am too busy to smile, I suppose," she said, and smiled the beautiful, humble, appealing smile he had so longed to see again, though he had not known the longing by its right name.

"Can't we be friends?" he ventured.

"You—I am afraid you can never trust me again."

"Yes, I can," she said. "It was very bitter at the time, but I thought it was so brave of you—and kind, too—to care what became of me. If you remember, I did want to trust you even on that dreadful day, but you wouldn't let me."

"I was a brute," he said, remorsefully.

"I do want to tell you one thing. Even if that boy had been holding my hand I should have thought I had a right to let him, if I liked—just as much as though I were a girl—or a widow."

"I don't understand. But tell me—please tell me anything you *will* tell me." His tone was very humble.

"My husband was a beast," she said,

calmly. "He betrayed me, he beat me, he had every vile quality a man can have. No, I'll be just to him; he was always good tempered when he was drunk. But when he was sober he used to beat me and pinch me——"

"But—but you could have got a separation, a divorce," he gasped.

"A separation wouldn't have freed me—really. And the Church doesn't believe in divorce," she said, demurely. "I did, however, and I left him, and instructed a solicitor. But the brute went mad before I could get free from him, and now, I suppose, I'm tied for life to a mad dog."

"Good God!" said the Rev. Christopher.

"I thought it all out—oh, many, many nights—and I made up my mind that I would go out and enjoy myself. I never had a good time when I was a girl. And another thing I decided—quite definitely—that if ever I fell in love I would—I should have the right to—I mean that I wouldn't let a horrible, degraded brute of a lunatic stand between me and the man I loved. And I was quite sure that I was right."

"And do you still think this?" he asked, in a low voice.

"Ah!" she said, "you've changed everything! I don't think the same about anything as I used to do. I think those two years with him must have made me nearly as mad as he is. And then I was so young! I am only twenty-three now, you know—and it did seem hard never to have had any fun. I did want so much to be happy."

She had not intended to speak like this, but, even as she spoke, she saw that this truth-telling far outshone the lamp of lies she had trimmed ready.

"You *will* be happy," he said, "there are better things in the world than——"

"Yes," she said, "oh, yes!"

Betty did nothing by halves. She had kept a barrier between her and him till she had excited him to break it down. The barrier once broken, she let it lie where he had thrown it, and became, all at once, in the most natural, matter of fact, guileless way, his friend.

She consulted him about everything. Let him call when he would, she always received him. She surrounded him with the dainty feminine spider webs from which his life, almost monastic till now, had been quite free. She imported a knitting aunt, so that he should not take fright at long *tête-à-têtes*. The knitting aunt was deafish and blindish, and did not walk much in the rose garden. Betty knew a good deal about roses, and she taught the Rev. Christopher all she knew.

She knew a little of the hearts of men, and she gently pushed him on the road to forgiveness from that half of the parish whom his first enthusiastic denunciations had offended. She rounded his angles. She turned a wayward ascetic into a fairly good parish priest. And he talked to her of ideals and honor and the service of God, and the work of the world. And she listened; and her beauty spoke to him so softly that he did not know that he heard.

One day after a long silence she turned quickly and met his eyes. After that she ceased to spin webs, for she saw. Yet she was as blind as he, though she did not know it, any more than he did.

At last he saw, in his turn, and the flash of the illumination nearly blinded him.

It was late evening; Betty was nailing up a trailing rose, and he was standing by the ladder, holding the nails and the snippets of scarlet cloth. The ladder slipped and he caught her in his arms. As soon as she had assured him that she was not hurt he said good-night and left her.

Betty went indoors and cried.

"Waht a pity!" she said; "oh, what a pity. Now he'll be frightened and it's all over. He'll never come again."

But the next evening he came, and when they had walked through the rose garden and had come to the sundial he stopped, and spoke:

"I've been thinking of nothing else since I saw you, when I caught you last night. Forgive me if I'm a fool; but when I held you—don't be angry—

but it seemed to me that you loved me——"

"Nothing of the sort," said Betty, very angrily.

"Then I must be mad," he said; "the way you caught my neck with your arm, and your face was against mine, and your hair crushed up against my ear. Oh, Betty, if you don't love me what shall I do? For I can't live without you."

Betty had won.

"But—even if I had loved you—I'm married," she urged, softly.

"Yes—do you suppose I've forgotten that? But you remember what you said—about being really free, and not being bound to that beast. I see that you were right, right, right. It's the rest of the world that's wrong. Oh, my dear, I can't live without you. Couldn't you love me? Let's go away—right away together. No one will love you as I do. No one knows you as I do—how good, and strong, and brave, and unselfish you are. Oh! try to love me a little."

Betty had leaned her elbows on the sundial, and her chin on her hands.

"But you used to think," she began.

"Ah—but I know better now. You've taught me everything. Only I never knew it till last night when I touched you. It was like a spark to a bonfire that I've been piling up ever since I've known you. You've taught me what life is, and love. Love can't be wrong. It's only wrong when it's stealing. We shouldn't be robbing anybody. We should both work better—happiness makes people work. I see that now I should have to give up parish work; but there's plenty of good work wants doing. Why, I've nearly finished that book of mine. I've worked at it night after night—with the thought of you hidden behind the work. If you were my wife what work I could do! Oh! Betty, if you only loved me!"

She lifted her face and looked at him gravely. He flung his arm around her shoulders and turned her face up to his. She was passive to his kisses. At last she kissed him, once, and drew herself from his arms.

"Come," she said.

She led him to the garden seat in the nut avenue.

"Now," she said, when he had taken his place beside her, "I'm going to tell you the whole truth. I was very angry with you when you came to me that first day. You were quite right. That boy had been holding my hand; what's more, he had been kissing it. It amused me, and if it hurt him I didn't care. Then you came. And you said things.

"And then you said you weren't afraid of me or of my weapons. That was a challenge. And I determined to make you love me. It was all planned—the helping in your work—and keeping out of your way at first was to make you wish to see me. And you see I succeeded. You *did* love me."

"I do," he said. He caught her hand and held it fiercely. "I deserved it all. I was a brute to you."

"I meant you to love me—and you did love me. I lied to you in almost everything—at first."

"About that man—was that a lie?" he asked, fiercely.

"No," she laughed, drearily. "That was true enough. You see it was more effective than any lie I could have invented. No lie could have added a single horror to *that* story! And so I've won—as I swore I would!"

"Is that all," he said, "all the truth?"

"It's all there's any need for," she said.

"I want it all. I want to know where I am—whether I really was mad last night. Betty, in spite of all your truth, I can't believe one thing. I can't believe that you don't love me."

"Man's vanity," she began, with a flippant laugh.

"Don't!" he said, harshly. "How dare you try to play with me? Man's vanity! But it's your honor! I know you love me. If you didn't you would be—"

"How do you know I'm not?"

"Silence," he said. "If you can't speak the truth hold your tongue and let me speak it. I love you—and you

love me—and we are going to be happy."

"I will speak the truth," said Betty, giving him her other hand. "You love me—and I love you, and we are going to be miserable. Yes—I will speak. Dear, I can't do it. Not even for you. I used to think—I thought I could—I was bitter. I think I wanted to be revenged on life, and God, and everything. I thought I didn't believe in God, but I wanted to spite Him all the same. But when you came—after that day on the porch—when you came and talked to me about all the good and beautiful things—why, then I knew that I really did believe in them, and I began to love you because you had believed them all the time, and because—and I didn't try to make you love me—after that day on the porch—at least not very much—oh, I do want to speak the truth. I used to try so *not* to try. I—I did want you to love me, though; I didn't want you to love any one else. I wanted you to love me just enough to make you happy, and not enough to make you miserable. And as long as you didn't know you loved me it was all right; and when you caught me last night I knew that you would know and it would be all over. You made up your mind to teach me that there are better things in the world than love—truth and honor and—things like that. And you've taught it me. It was a duel and you've won."

"And you meant to teach me that love is stronger than anything in the world. And you have won, too."

"Yes," she said, "we've both won. That's the worst of it—or the best."

"What is to become of us?" he said. "Oh, my dear—what are we to do? Do you forgive me? If you are right I must be wrong; but I can't see anything now except that I want you so."

"I'm glad you loved me enough to be silly," she said, "but, oh, my dear—how glad I am that I love you too much to let you."

"But what are we to do?"

"Do? Nothing. Don't you see we've taught each other everything we know? We've given each other everything we

can give. Isn't it good to love like this—even if this has to be all?"

"It's all very difficult," he said, "but everything shall be as you choose; only somehow I think it's worse for me than for you. I loved you before—and now I adore you. I seem to have made a saint of you—but you've made me a man."

One wishes with all one's heart that that lunatic would die. The situation is, one would say, impossible. Yet the

lovers do not find it so. They work together, and parish scandal has almost ceased to patter about their names. There is a subtle pleasure for both in the ceremonious courtesy with which ever since that night they treat each other. It contrasts so splendidly with the living flame upon each heart-altar. So far, the mutual passion has improved the character of each. All the same, one wishes that the lunatic would die—for she is not so much of a saint as he thinks her, and he is more of a man than she knows.



VIVISECTION

AS I was strolling down the way,
Beneath the smiling skies,
I met a damsel fair as May
Who took at once my eyes!

Completely mistress of me now,
Just where she would she led;
And through her cunning wiles, I vow,
I lost, alas, my head!

And then, since I had not the face
To charge her with her art,
Still worse and worse became my case—
She stole from me my heart!

I should have turned, I doubt it not,
And sought escape, alarmed;
But at a look, upon the spot
She promptly me disarmed!

Quite merciless, the wicked elf
Whom naught else would appease,
She straightway brought my wretched self,
De-feet-ed, to my knees!

Sans eyes—and head, heart, arms and feet;
Ay, bitter is my cup!
Well may they say upon the street
I'm terribly cut up.

EDWIN L. SABIN.

A GHOST

By Juliet Wilbor Tompkins

I.

"THAT settles it!" said Grant.

He laid the announcement on the desk, and studied it coolly. The marriage of her daughter, Edith, to Mr. Whitney Cooper. Very well, then!

Grant lit a cigarette and leaned back in his chair, staring over the roofs to the ice-blocked river and the frozen shore beyond. He was rather proud of his impassivity. He had not done quite so well six months before with the announcement of her engagement lying before him, though even that had scarcely been a shock. Every one had seen it coming, had known what must come when Whitney Cooper so far forgot his prudence as to be seen three times in succession with the same girl.

Perhaps Cooper was not altogether to be blamed for this somewhat pompous prudence of his. A man so rich that when he is seen talking with a woman, tacit etiquette forbids any other man from breaking in or joining, no matter what the provocation—such a victim to millions has caution thrust upon him. The universal acceptance of the fact that whomsoever he noticed was having the chance of her life, and must not on any account be interfered with, had finally worked on Cooper's nerves, keeping him away from dances and entertainments and making him stiff of neck and reserved of eye when pretty women were eager to be friendly.

Edith Livingston had not an eager impulse in all her cool, well-bred, hyper-civilized being. "Our lady of the snows," Grant had called her, after his inef-

fectual three years of patient devotion. Cooper, pausing to speak to her one day in a momentary lapse of caution, found this out. The serene, half-amused gray eyes had piqued him, at first delightfully, then intolerably. Her family fortunes had lain in ruins for a dozen years, and when she was not paying visits among the great she lived in a crumbling old yellowstone house that leaked, and rattled, and rotted more ominously every year, but the unconscious pride of race that lay in her finely cut features and in every movement of her long, slim body made Cooper suddenly feel bungling and newly made. After all, mere millions might be a trifle grotesque, regarded as a pedestal! His neck muscles began to relax, the wary coldness of his eyes was sometimes replaced by a bewildered humility.

Grant stood back, his cheerfulness outwardly undiminished.

"Very well, then!"—that was the sum of his philosophy. He would be debonair though the skies fell. He had told no one but Edith, and if ashes now replaced the living fires, it was his own secret.

He had had other troubles these last six months, quite black and engrossing enough to drive his personal sorrow into the background. They came over him now with a sickening pressure of anxiety as his father pushed open the door and closed it cautiously behind him.

At five that afternoon Grant was shown into a very large, very grand and very ugly drawing-room, and was presently informed that Miss Ferris would be down directly. He glanced about with subdued amusement; he had

been a trifle curious about this room. He had heard Miss Ferris' voluble, undismayed comment on the subject. "It's frightful, simply frightful, but father won't have one thing touched!" It occurred to him now that it must be rather hard to have a fortune in your own right and yet be obliged to receive your guests in a wilderness of crimson satin and gold fringe.

In an appalling gilt frame over the sofa was a canvas showing a little girl in a ruffled white frock and a very tight blue sash, with a string of coral about her throat and a woolly white dog at her feet. Grant, standing beneath it, smiled to see the resemblance between this and the Leslie Ferris he knew—the chocolate-brown eyes and the short, red mouth, the rough, toneless hair that might be brown or black. He knew the headlong, vigorous fashion in which the child would have gone after anything she wanted, utterly unmindful of the fine clothes that had been put upon her, good-tempered, careless, impulsive to her finger tips—just like the Leslie of to-day. The smile gave place to speculative interest. Surely a man could fall sufficiently in love with an extremely nice girl when there were such excellent reasons for his doing so. He would never again care in the grand style, of course; but that would only make it easier.

There were reckless steps on the stairs, a trip and a sound of tearing silk, and Leslie came in, a little breathless, as she always was in the first few moments of an encounter with Grant.

"Oh, are you looking at that dreadful thing of me?" she exclaimed. "Don't say I haven't changed in the least—everybody does! The woolly dog is purely poetic license; I never owned anything so foolish. My dogs were always Irish terriers and mastiffs—good, honest dog." She stooped and tore off an end of silk dust ruffle that was trailing from her skirt, and looked about vaguely for a place to drop the fragment. Grant put out his hand for it, and placed it in his pocket.

"I wish she wouldn't tear her clothes!" he thought, then pulled him-

self up abruptly. He was not there to find flaws.

"And so you really called—at last," she went on. She was getting a firmer hold on her self-possession, and could give him time to speak now. "I wonder why!"

"It is too soon to tell you," he answered. Oh, the relief it would be, the blessed relief! Surely one could care very truly for a girl like Leslie.

She had flushed faintly at his words, with a startled glance, but meeting his judicious, amused eyes, she laughed. Grant's power of being baldly frank without earnestness of manner had often proved a valuable defense.

"It isn't too soon for tea, if that is what you mean," she suggested, rising from her chair with a little hop, betraying that one foot had been tucked under her and was with some difficulty regained. He followed her to the tea table, on which a servant had just placed an urn.

"We will call it tea, for the present," he agreed.

"I'm afraid you won't call it tea, after you have tasted it," she laughed. "No one ever did this sort of thing worse than I. The man who marries me for my domestic talents—"

"Let me do it, then," interposed Grant, taking the teapot away from her. "I make excellent tea. I will give you a lesson for the benefit of the future Mr. Leslie Ferris."

She laughed delightedly, watching him with vivid admiration as he took off his glasses and peered into the kettle to see if it was boiling, then warmed teapot and cups. She was certainly a very sweet, nice girl. And the load off his soul, the bitter burden of debt and impending failure under which he had been bending in secret for six weary months! He could more than make it up to her, once this crisis was passed.

"Now you can pour it," he said. "That is a nice little object lesson in life for you—man laboriously provides, and woman gracefully dispenses. But she shouldn't have spilled!" he added to himself, then frowned impatiently at his carping spirit.

"Are you coming again?" she asked, when he rose to go. "Next time I will take you to the library; that is a little more human than this mausoleum." She glanced about with good-humored depreciation at the crimson and marble.

"Indeed I will come," Grant said. "Nice girl," he commented to himself, as he went down the steps. "But I don't like brown eyes!" answered the perverse spirit within.

II.

"But I know you want something to drink!" And Mrs. Fielding interrupted her welcome to disappear in the direction of the dining-room. The cheerful sound of the ice pick came to them a moment later through the open doors. Grant sighed luxuriously from the depths of his wicker chair.

"Richard, my boy," he said, "I am inclined to think I made the mistake of my life that I didn't whirl in and marry Katherine before you discovered her."

Fielding glanced complacently about the cool, bare room, with its drifting muslin curtains and shining floor, its few deep, comfort-giving chairs and couches and its restful lack of small objects. The room was not unlike Katherine herself.

"Well," he admitted, "I don't want to rub it in, but I am strongly inclined to think that you did. Of course," he added, "it is just possible that she wouldn't have had you."

Grant smoothed his thin, brown hair across his forehead with a flat palm, and pulled down his white waistcoat.

"Possible—but not probable," he said. The two were still laughing when Katherine came back with a tray of glasses, a generous, white-gowned figure with faint blond hair parted from a Madonna forehead, and wide, tranquil eyes. She smiled sympathetically.

"What is it—may I know?" she asked.

"Oh, Stephen is just being a silly ass, as usual," said her husband, rising to take the tray. "Katie, we haven't broken it to you yet," he went on, "but

Stephen is going to stay a week. His doctor said he had to get a rest to break up his insomnia, and he thought it would be cheaper to come here than to——"

"Oh, see here, Richard!" Grant interposed. "Your humor isn't always refined. He wanted me to come, Katherine, and I leaped at the idea."

"But we left his luggage outside till we saw how you took it," Fielding concluded.

Katherine took it as she did everything, with smiling serenity. She was pleased, in her large, tranquil way, and had no need of emphasis to make him feel it. Grant realized a sense of grateful peace as he went up to his room to put on cooler clothes.

He was very fond of them, these two. It was the one household on earth that he could have visited at this time, with his worn nerves and heavy head. Oh, sleep, sleep! He stooped and pressed his face into the cool linen of the pillows. Surely one could sleep here, could forget the jangle of the harness that the city had put upon him and stretch free limbs. He looked out through elm branches to the dipping green fields closing down to the river, and found himself murmuring a poem of his childhood:

"Among green, pleasant meadows,
And in a grove so wild,
Was set a marble image
Of the Virgin and her Child.
And there——"

How did it go?

"And there on summer evenings
A lovely boy would rove,
To play beside the image
That sanctified the grove."

He smiled, and said it over again. He had not thought of it for twenty years, but it had a certain cool charm for his ears. "Among green, pleasant meadows," he repeated with a momentary sense of rest. Then the harassing thoughts came back, and he went downstairs to escape them.

Richard was holding earnest conclave with his wife, so Grant went out by himself, turning toward the sloping

meadows and the river, the worries he had tried to run away from following like a pack of noisy terriers at his heels, and the one big, wearisome problem hovering close behind, ready to fling itself on him at the first hint of weakness. Grant whistled firmly, if soundlessly, and looked about with a forced air of cheerful interest.

"Ah, yes, buttercups!" he heard himself murmur presently, and laughed helplessly, two fingers mechanically holding his eyeglasses in place, since laughter was apt to unseat them.

The path he had chosen led him through alternate thicket and meadow to the river, bordered on either bank by pleasant, old-fashioned country places, a glimpse of a white portico or an antiquated brown turret showing occasionally through the trees. He knew who lived in most of them. High on the right bank was the ugly yellowstone mansion of rigid cupola and high, narrow windows that had crumbled and rotted till the Cooper millions came to the rescue last December. In a more modern dwelling farther down he had first met Leslie Ferris.

The cloud came back into his eyes. It had seemed so simple at first! Why, wasn't he in love with her? Of course, the big fires were burned out; something had come to an end when he had accepted the truth and the wedding cards. Still, one ought to be able to care sufficiently! He had gone to see Leslie diligently all winter, sure of his welcome, and waiting hopefully for the little rush of elemental feeling that should carry him through the preliminaries. She had worn her loveliest gowns for him, and he had inwardly resented her wish to please. When he had tried to enjoy her vivacity, he had found himself wishing fretfully that she had more composure. He reminded himself daily and hourly that she was a pretty and a nice girl, such as any man might be proud to love. Only, at last, he had to accept the fact—he did not love her. She even irritated him, with her eager little ways, almost school-girlish, her indiscriminating readiness for any sort of amusement. One night

last week, standing on a moonlit balcony, she had impulsively laid her hand on his sleeve for a moment—and he had impatiently wished that she wouldn't. Then he had known.

He was walking now with listless arms and bent head. The ruin he and his father had fought so manfully, throwing in good money after bad to save an old name, was very close, and he was worn out with the struggle. Such a small part of Leslie's fortune would mean tranquillity; and in time, with this crisis averted, he would be able to give every cent back to her, and more.

She might have a far worse fate. He was a cheerful and kindly person, with a respect for the proprieties and a sense of humor, who would not squander her money or disappoint her as a man. He would never for an instant let her feel any lack. Perhaps he had no right to retreat; he had not made actual love to her, but he certainly had offered the tacit courtship of small attentions. If he had let her care— He lifted both hands with an exasperated gesture.

"But I don't want her!" he broke out.

"Then by all means don't have her," said a cool voice just in front of him. Grant started, and looked up. A green linen gown, a white parasol, amused gray eyes—his lady of the snows sat on an old bench under a willow, smiling at him.

"Edith!" he cried, taking her hand in both of his, subconsciously proud, even at the moment, of the self-possession that allowed him to show all his excitement. "Why—but—I didn't know you were on this side of the world!"

"We aren't, officially," she said, making room for him to sit beside her. "We only arrived Wednesday, and came down here to see my mother and rest a little."

"I thought you were to be gone a year," Grant said, with a dim idea that it was a stupid remark, yet impelled to make it.

"We were; but I became homesick," she answered. There was a shade of challenge in her voice, as though she had

said, "Make what you can out of that; you are welcome to it." He turned away, subtly ashamed.

"And what brought you to this particular spot at just this moment?" he went on. "Half a mile from home—and you never walked."

"I am watching for my husband, by special request," she spoke amusedly. "When I hear particularly reckless wheels on the bridge, I shall know that he is coming, and then, if he can stop the horse, I shall drive home with him. Don't you think it is a pretty idea?"

"Very," said Grant, gravely, stooping to pick some tiny yellow flowers that were growing at his feet.

"I shall have several persons you know down here this week," she went on presently, breaking the silence. "Leslie Ferris among them." He looked up in surprise.

"Why, I didn't know you and she——"

"Oh, we don't; but you know she is Whitney's cousin. I wanted to find out if something I had heard was true, and this seemed a simple way." He met her eyes squarely.

"We are not," he said.

"So I inferred," her glance traveled to the spot where he had stood when she disclosed her presence. His courage did not falter.

"I am flattered that you were interested to know," he said. She dropped her eyes with a faint smile.

"Oh, I rather missed you over there, I think. You see, I had become so used to you."

"Yes, I was always about, under foot," he admitted, cheerfully. There was nothing to be learned from his profile. Then the distant sound of wheels on the bridge came to them.

"There is my signal," she said, rising. "I shall see you again, of course?"

He made a little bunch of his flowers and presented them.

"Edith, from Stephen," he said. "Oh, yes, I shall run in, if I may. I am down for a week, at the Fieldings." When she was halfway up the bank he called after her: "Edith!" She paused, and glanced back.

"Well?"

"Am I to call you Mrs. Cooper?"

"Oh—why should you?"

"Very well, then!"

She started on, but he stopped her again.

"And, Edith! That remark I made just before I saw you was in reference to a mare Wetherall wants me to buy."

"So I should have supposed," she said.

When she had disappeared, with a farewell nod over her shoulder, he drew a long breath and dropped back on the bench.

"And I came down for utter rest and quiet," he murmured.

III.

Leslie led the way in reckless spirits which her horse evidently shared. Grant, to whose burden another sleepless night had been added, was relieved when Fred Wetherall stole his place beside her, giving him a chance to drop back and ride in silence. The little party straggled up a long slope and disappeared over the ridge, leaving him free to loiter peacefully in the shade. But presently his eyes grew absent, the cares he had been ordered to banish came crowding back. There must be some way out of it all, some move that would at least delay the crisis that the carelessness of one man and the dishonesty of another had forced upon an old and honored house. They had tried all the obvious expedients; but surely there was still some adroit measure that might save the day. If he could only find it!

His horse sidled affectedly from a bit of white fluttering across the road. Grant, seeing that it was a handkerchief, picked it up, and smiled rather grimly as he read the initials embroidered in one corner—"L. F." Was this inevitably the final expedient?

"Oh, very well, then!" he said, with a shrug, as one accepting fate.

The sound of what Edith had called particularly reckless wheels on the road behind him told that Blue Streak was

catching up with the party. A moment later the trap whirled into view, Cooper driving with devout attention, Edith sitting rather listlessly beside him. Her eyes cleared as she saw Grant, and Cooper brought his horse to a reluctant walk.

"What are you doing by yourself?" she asked.

"I couldn't—keep up," Grant said.

"Why, that's a good mount you've got," commented Cooper. Grant smiled, but did not explain.

"I have just had a sign," he said to Edith. "Did you ever get one?"

"What is it?" she asked, leaning back with the indolent, amused air that always made her seem like royalty to him. Other women leaned forward. Leslie would have tried to guess what he meant.

"Well, you say to yourself, what shall I do? Which way shall I turn? And instantly a sign drops down on the road in front of you, giving you your direction. So, of course, you follow it, and come out at the right place."

"The roads are all plain enough about here," said Cooper. "You can't go wrong unless you try."

"Perhaps—he tried," murmured Edith.

They had pulled up at the top of the ridge to look off at the rolling country, Blue Streak quivering and fretting at the delay. At that moment from the road beneath came a distant puffing. Cooper straightened up abruptly, taking a new hold on the reins.

"Hello—automobile!" he said. "Want to get out, Edith?" The puffing was interrupted by a blatant toot. Blue Streak snorted deep in his chest, his ears sharply forward. Grant's tired nerves betrayed him into sudden panic.

"Do get out," he exclaimed, half under his breath. Edith glanced at the horse, quite unmoved.

"Oh, Whitney can drive past anything," she said. Grant saw the color rise in her husband's face and his shoulders square themselves.

"All right, then," he said, briefly, starting forward.

It was Grant who would have had an

accident if his horse had not been indifferent to motor cars. He grew weak and dizzy as Blue Streak writhed and plunged and reared, held inexorably in control, now soothed, now commanded, till the throbbing machine was safely passed. When it was over, Cooper drew the whip gently along the horse's trembling flank.

"Good boy!" he said. Then he looked down at Edith, whose hands had lain indolent and relaxed on her knee throughout the struggle. "Good girl," he added.

"I didn't mind," she said, indifferently, turning back to Grant. Her eyebrows lifted a little as she saw how pale he was.

"Oh, I'm not fit for anything but a perambulator, these days," Grant said, with an impatient laugh, in answer to the look. "Don't let me keep you back, Cooper; I'll follow." When they had disappeared he dismounted, and threw himself down on the bank. Presently he rolled over, stretching his arms out wide in the cool grass.

"I plainly foresee that this place is not going to restore my nervous system," he said, aloud. Then he took off his glasses and flung one arm across his eyes.

"A little sleep, merciful Lord!" he murmured.

Fielding was detained in town that night, so Grant dined alone with Katherine, as he often had before she was married. A sense of her strength and sympathy, the generous warmth of her, brought subtle comfort and tempted him to the verge of confidences. She looked so sweet and calm in the candlelight, with her faint blond hair parted from her low forehead, her kind eyes, and the clear freshness of her lawn gown, that Grant was moved by a sudden longing to be very little, so little that he could be gathered up in her arms with his head on her deep shoulder, and rocked and hummed to— He laughed suddenly.

"What is it?" she asked. He stretched out his hand to her on the table.

"Katherine, I was wishing I were your little boy," he said. Her large,

white hand closed over his for a moment as she rose.

"My dear, I wish you were," she answered, in a tone that showed she had gauged his need, under all his cheerfulness. He followed her into the drawing-room, lit only by wide squares of moonlight on the floor, and dropped down on a couch.

"Don't light up," he begged. "I want to talk." She sat down near him, and waited in companionable silence.

"Katherine," he began, presently, "you are a wise woman, and you know all about receipts. I want you to mix me a potion."

"What sort?" she asked.

"Something that will lay a ghost." Grant laughed as she spoke, and held up a cigarette for permission before lighting it.

"The ghost of a past self?" she suggested.

"Of a past feeling. It died long ago, and I thought I attended properly to the funeral. But the thing—walks."

"You are sure it died?"

Grant smoked in silence for some minutes.

"Oh, yes," he said, finally.

"Well, then, put a nice warm living person in the haunted chamber; that will drive it away."

"My good woman, I have been holding such a person there forcibly for six months, at great personal inconvenience. And the instant the ghost appeared——" He relapsed into silence.

"I believe," she said, decidedly, "that that ghost of yours is only a bad habit."

"I don't see how that helps me! It is about as hard to break up a habit as to break up a ghost." They both laughed. "Katherine," he went on, with an abrupt change of position, "what is your frank opinion of marrying a woman for her money?"

"Well, I don't think it is—pretty."

"Even if a man were very kind and friendly and pleasant about the house, and wouldn't disappoint the lady?"

"Wouldn't disappoint her?" she repeated, vigorously. "Sometimes, Stephen, you talk like a child. Do you think——"

"Hello!" said Fielding's voice from the doorway. "What are you two doing here in the dark?"

"Flirting horribly," said Grant.

IV.

"What epitaph would you choose?" Grant flung the question among them after an absent-minded silence. He was sitting on the steps of the old yellowstone house, his shoulder to the group on the porch, his eyes on the preparations for a resplendent sunset. "What would you like best to have said of you behind your back?" he added, in explanation.

"What would you?" asked Cooper, who was cleaning a gun with affectionate care.

"He could always laugh." "He would have found something amusing at his own funeral." I think I'd take that," said Grant. They all laughed, except Cooper, who frowned, and said: "What rot! I'd want them to say, 'He could drive anything on four legs.'"

"Well, they do," said Leslie. "Oh, I know what I want—'She was a dangerous woman!'" Even Cooper shouted at that, Leslie looked so like a joyous little girl in her short piqué gown, seated on the broad balustrade with her feet swinging.

"What will you choose, Edith?" Grant asked, when they had finished making fun of Leslie. She smiled lazily.

"Oh, I don't know; I don't believe I care enough about public opinion to have any choice. They may say what they please so long as they don't trouble me with it."

"How like you!" Grant commented. "Dear me, Leslie, doesn't she put us into the infant class!" He had never called her Leslie before, but he did it deliberately, with a whimsical pretense that he had taken seriously the sign of the day before.

There was a thrill of happiness in the laugh with which she answered, but Grant did not notice it. His eyes were

on Edith, and as he had spoken, an odd little change had come over her face, an expression of quick, cold anger. It left Grant curiously startled. So she could feel, our lady of the snows! Of course he had misread the look; she could not be—oh, absurd! Yet the longing to try her grew irresistible. Leslie's dangling shoe ribbon gave him an opportunity. He rose and came over to her.

"You are a careless little girl," he said, severely, stooping to tie it. "Some day you will trip and break your neck—and I shouldn't find anything amusing at *your* funeral." He straightened the bow and gave it a little pat as he rose. Edith's face was impassive; but the hand on the arm of her chair was clinched till the knuckles were white.

Grant felt suddenly cold and frightened. He strolled away from them to the other end of the long porch, and stood staring blindly off across the treetops. He could hear Cooper's voice haranguing on the proper treatment of guns, and presently Leslie's radiant laugh. The world was a whirling chaos about him.

Blue Streak was brought round from the stables, and Cooper was heard urging his wife to come for a drive.

"Oh, take Leslie," she said. There was a forced note in the girl's acceptance. As they drove away, it seemed to Grant that both faces looked disappointed. For the first time he wondered what there was for Cooper in this. He remembered the man's dull flush, the gratification shown in every line of his body when his wife had thrown him a careless bone of praise for his driving, the day of the automobile. It seemed to him suddenly pathetic. He moved impatiently away from the thought.

"Come and amuse me," suggested Edith.

"I will row you up the river;" Grant was surprised at the commonplace sound of his own voice.

It was good to feel the oars in his hands, a simple and tangible task ahead of him. He rowed bareheaded and coatless, sending the boat flying upstream. It was a quiet river, deep, but

with little current, winding under trees and between vivid green meadows, its placid curves filled with yellow lilies. They had left the region of country places far behind them before Grant turned or looked at Edith. Then he drew in the oars, and passed his handkerchief over his face and inside his collar.

"That was good," he said. She lifted her eyes to the fading gold of the rippled sky overhead.

"I missed you dreadfully, abroad;" she made the statement coolly, as though it were of no especial importance to her. "I never had realized how much—you amused me. I had become used to doing things with you—and most persons are rather dull to go about with. Did you miss me?"

Grant smiled to himself, his eyes on the bank against which the boat was nosing.

"There have been—times when I have—missed you, Edith," he admitted.

"Why didn't you write?"

"I sometimes had a faint hope that you would; but decided you were both wise and kind not to."

"Why kind?"

He laughed at her.

"Think it over carefully, and you will see why," he suggested.

"I never intended to be kind," she protested, "if by kind you mean letting some other lady have you! Do you mean that?"

"Perhaps." He pressed an oar against a venerable trunk, and pushed the boat out into the stream again. "Shall we explore farther? I haven't been beyond this point."

"Yes—suppose we go on," said Edith, slowly. "You aren't afraid, are you?" He glanced ahead as the stream wound into the dark of a close thicket.

"Only for you," he said. Their eyes met by accident, and then they both laughed, a little breathlessly.

"I shall be sorry if you marry," she went on, presently, in the same impersonal, half-amused tone that nevertheless carries subtle vibrations.

"Well, I didn't altogether—like it, you know, when you married." Grant

was apparently absorbed in taking soundings with an oar.

"Then you are going to?"

"My dear Edith, how does one know what one is going to do!" he spoke with sudden irritability. "In time I expect to marry, of course—and become a householder, and rent a pew, and bring up my family in the way they should go."

"Then it is not so impossible to care twice as you used to suppose?"

"Ah, that's another matter!"

"Tell me why."

"No, I think not."

They came out of the shadow into a broad open space verging into marshes, with a cool evening sky above.

"Will you go on?" he asked.

"Shall we? Or shall we go back?"

He drew out his watch with prosaic literalness.

"You are going to be late for dinner, if we don't," he said. She sighed impatiently.

"Oh, very well—let us keep to the letter of the dinner hour, whatever else happens."

They were nearly home before she spoke again. Then she leaned forward—as other women did.

"We must have more of our little parties together next winter," she said. "Whitney can't bear music and pictures and things. I shall depend on you for all that."

"Edith," said Grant, swinging steadily to the oars, "there are several old proverbs that I could quote to you—about burnt children especially. In my old age I am coming to value my peace of mind. No, I shall not see very much of Mrs. Whitney Cooper, *née* Livingston."

"How stupid of you, Stephen! Just because you can't have everything—you won't take anything at all."

"Yes."

"I wish——" she began, then broke off, and they rowed up to the landing in silence. Grant was suddenly conscious of a mortal weariness, a black depression. Something was gone, hopelessly lost; he was too heavy-hearted to know what. A sleepy chirping sounding all

about them as they walked up under the trees.

"Hear the little birds," he said, with a man's desire to keep up appearances.

"I don't care anything about the little birds, and I don't believe you do," Edith answered, listlessly. He dropped his head, feeling dimly convicted of cowardice.

"Damn the little birds," he acknowledged.

Leslie and Whitney had just returned, and were being interviewed by an official-looking boy with a bicycle.

"Oh, there he is," Whitney exclaimed. "Grant, here is a telegram for you. Mrs. Fielding sent the boy over."

Grant, with an apology, broke it open, and held it close to his eyes in the dim light. His face, as he refolded it, showed that the news was not pleasant.

"My father wants to see me about some business," he explained. "I ought to run up to-night. Do you know anything about the trains, Cooper? I'd have to change my clothes."

"I'll take you over with Blue Streak—he isn't put out yet. I think there's a train about eight. Edith, have you a time-table?"

Cooper hurried off to recall the horse, and Edith turned to the house to look up the trains. Grant opened the telegram again. One of their last props had failed them. It looked now as though they might be facing the fight to a finish.

"I hope it isn't anything unpleasant," Leslie said. He crushed the message into his pocket with a shrug.

"Oh, just business. I shall be down again, so I won't say good-by."

"I wish——" she faltered, then brought it out with an effort, "I wish you wouldn't go with Blue Streak!"

"But why not?" Grant asked, in surprise.

"He isn't a safe horse—not for anybody to drive! There was a pile of boards, where they were mending the bridge, and Whitney had just all he could do—I wasn't much frightened, but I knew how close we came to going over the bank." At the sound of wheels she came nearer to him, putting her

hand on his arm. "Couldn't you hurry away—pretend that it was quicker by the short cut?" she urged, and Grant saw that her eyes were full of tears. He took her hand in both his.

"My dear girl," he said, gently, "I couldn't do that. But I am very grateful that you care about my safety. I don't deserve it—I'm a tired, stupid, burned-out old gentleman who doesn't sleep well and who is afflicted with ghosts, and I'd be very small loss. But I do appreciate it, Leslie, more than I can say. Good-night."

He kissed the hand he held, and she went into the house without answering as Edith came down the steps. Edith's good-bye was curt, but Grant was too preoccupied to notice. His thoughts were already in town.

V.

Grant rose with a stretch and a sigh. It seemed impossible that only twenty-four hours before he had been rowing a boat up a river. The day had called for every resource, every atom of wit and diplomacy he possessed, and now, at sunset, peace was restored, the name still stood. They could count on a clear month in which to gather reinforcements before the next onslaught need be expected. How they were to meet that—

Grant pulled out his watch.

"Well, father, I am going back to the Fieldings for a night or two," he said. "There is nothing more to be done now, is there?"

"Nothing—nothing," said the older man. Something in his face and voice made his son frown sharply.

"Poor old boy!" he muttered, as he passed out.

In the train Grant coolly and frankly took his decision. He was going to follow the sign—to ask Leslie Ferris to marry him. He would have to make love to her—very well, then! He would do what was demanded. Katherine would probably despise him; but for that matter he would more or less despise himself. He was beaten, that was

all. He must have peace, no matter what the cost. The financial side of the affair would arrange itself simply enough. The instant he told Leslie the state of his affairs, as he would be in honor bound to do as soon as possible, he knew that her generous hands would be held out to him, that all they needed would be fairly thrust upon him. And she would not mistrust for an instant, if he told her that he loved her. Grant winced, then set his teeth and hardened his soul to the necessity. And—this he vowed with silent intensity—she should never know, any lack. The money he could make up to her in a few years, and unremitting kindness and devotion would hide from her how she had been—cheated. The last word was hard, but he admitted it grimly.

"Serves her right for dropping her handkerchiefs about the country," he protested, trying to find comfort in flippancy. "I suppose I'll be stooping for handkerchiefs and supplying pins the rest of my natural life. Well, it will be better than days like this! Much better," he asserted to an unformulated doubt. The question of Edith he refused to face. Her very name was forbidden his mind, and the tired mind acquiesced readily enough.

When he left the train he found Fielding standing on the platform, anxiously scanning the passengers. His face cleared at sight of Grant.

"Oh, Stephen! Didn't Katherine come out on that train with you?"

Grant had not seen her, and they stood watching till the last person had alighted. Katherine had gone up to town that morning, and had expected to come back with her husband, nearly two hours earlier. But she had not appeared, though there had been several trains since.

"It is so unlike her," Fielding exclaimed, with a worried forehead. "She only went up to do some shopping. I don't see what could have kept her."

"Perhaps there is a message at the house now," Grant suggested. They turned towards home, leaving orders for one of the station carriages to meet every train, and taking a short cut across

the fields. Grant protested once or twice at the pace, then seized Fielding's arm and brought him to an abrupt standstill.

"Is it absolutely necessary that we run?" he demanded. Fielding laughed apologetically.

"You see, it is so unlike her," he explained for the tenth time.

There was no message at the house, and the dinner was drying up, they were told. Fielding would have started off again, this time to the telegraph office, but Grant interposed.

"Richard, you are absurd," he exclaimed. "Katherine is an able-bodied woman, and she took care of herself for a number of years before she ever heard of you. I move we eat."

"But what could have kept her?" Fielding protested, following reluctantly to the dining-room. "Everybody's out of town."

"Well, do you think she has been kidnapped?"

"No, I don't, you great ass!"

"Then eat your dinner."

Richard refused soup, and carved in a silence that soon changed from irritated to uneasy.

"Such frightful things do happen in town, every day," he hazarded, presently. "I think I'll just see—" He went to the front door, napkin in hand, and listened for wheels. "It's about time for the next train," he apologized. "I suppose you think I'm extremely foolish."

"I do," said Grant.

"Well, you wait till you're married," Fielding retorted. The words chilled Grant ominously. A new comprehension of what marriage might mean came like a dawning question, but he thrust it hastily away.

It was a sultry night, still and oppressive. After dinner they took their cigars to the porch, where Grant stretched himself in the hammock, while Fielding sat alert on the steps.

"There's a train in twenty minutes," he announced, presently.

"Katherine's a wonder, isn't she?" Grant said, musingly. "You ought to be everlastingly grateful to me, Richard,

for bringing you two together." Richard smoked in silence for some minutes.

"There aren't any words big enough to say what she is," he said, finally, his head turned away. "You don't know a hundredth part of it."

"I suppose not," Grant admitted. Questions that he did not want answered were forcing themselves upon him, insisting on being faced. "I can't fancy fussing like this because Mrs. Stephen didn't come home," he said, impulsively.

"Better not marry till you can fancy it," said Fielding.

"But, see here, Richard! Suppose a woman cared a lot for a man, and he thought she was an excellent person, liked her immensely and all that, without being exactly in love—don't you think he could be sufficiently happy with her?"

"No," said Fielding. Grant moved impatiently.

"Oh, well, you're sentimental," he exclaimed.

"Sentimental nothing!" Fielding took out his cigar and faced about. "Suppose you think for a moment of her side of the case—granted she's in love?"

"Well, one would be pleasant, and friendly, and—"

"Oh, rot!" Fielding struck his fist indignantly on the porch floor. "Haven't you ever been in love? Well, then, could any amount of kindness and friendliness have satisfied you in return?"

"But she wouldn't know—"

"Oh, wouldn't she! You might fool her for a few weeks, but you couldn't carry it much longer. Besides, you wouldn't. You'd slip away from it, and then she'd try to make you care, and wear herself out because you didn't. It would be straight hell all round."

"But—"

Fielding held up his hand for silence.

"Hello—don't you hear wheels?" One of the old-fashioned carryalls from the station rattled into view, and a moment later Katherine was smiling at them from its dingy interior. She alighted with her hand on Richard's

shoulder, and came slowly up the steps, looking pale and tired.

"I am so sorry, dear!" she was explaining. "I was kept and kept, waiting for some one. I hadn't even a chance to telegraph till very late—I was afraid it wouldn't be delivered."

"We will probably get it at breakfast," her husband laughed; he was boyishly gay in his relief. "Have you had dinner, Katie?"

"Oh, something. I will come and have a glass of milk, though. Stephen, I am glad to see you back."

She took his hand, but her smile was absent, her eyes seemed to look through and beyond him. He glanced after her curiously as she went down the hall. At the door of the dining-room she paused, and lifted her face to Richard with a little gesture startling to one who had only known her in her large tranquillity. Grant turned away, suddenly sick at heart.

They called good-night to him, later, and presently he went to his own room, and made a futile attempt to get to sleep. A brief doze left him wider awake than ever, his thoughts racing, his lips going through the conversations of the day with maddening iteration. The heat lay on him like a heavy blanket. Towards two he got up and stole downstairs. The front door was open, and on the steps of the porch sat Fielding, smoking up at an ancient yellow moon. Grant dropped down beside him, deeply grateful for company.

"Couldn't you sleep, either?" he asked. Fielding shook his head, and they sat silently together till the moon dipped behind elm branches and a faint breath of coolness came to them, brushing the long grass like an unseen skirt. Then Fielding took out his pipe, and knocked it gently against the stalk of a climbing rose.

"She waited to see her doctor," he said. Grant felt a sudden clutch of fright.

"Oh, Richard, nothing wrong!" he exclaimed. Richard smiled slowly.

"No—nothing wrong," he said, then he held out his hand. As their eyes met, Grant understood. Their hands

gripped, and then Richard went quietly back into the house.

It was a long hour before Grant stirred. His face looked lined and worn when at last he rose.

"I believe I had forgotten what they really were—love and marriage," he said half aloud.

VI.

The next day was clean and brilliant, its warmth a delight rather than an oppression. Grant went down across the meadows singing to himself. Out of the night had come the solution, and he marveled at the simplicity of it. He had simply accepted failure. The hopeless struggle should not last another week, not another day. They would openly give up, pay what they could, and begin at the bottom on such terms as they could make. At least no one could say it had been anything but a good fight and an honorable failure, or that they had kept anything back for themselves. The pride in a name that had stood for three generations seemed all at once secondary to the pride that could go to meet defeat. Here was an end to a false position, both public and private. It amazed him that he could have for a moment thought forced love-making the lesser evil. His heart expanded in a new freedom, a forgotten luxury of peace. He was going to the yellowstone house to say good-by.

Blue Streak was fretting on the drive, a groom clinging to his head, and Edith was following her husband down the steps when he came in sight. He could not hear their words, but he saw Edith pause and turn to Cooper, who protested a moment, then got in and drove off alone, giving Grant a grave nod as they passed. His face had the look of unresentful disappointment that Grant had seen there once before. Edith's was unusually animated.

"You have saved me from a horrible, all-day trip," she said, holding out her hand. "Eight miles each way, to visit a stock farm—imagine! And I couldn't put it off on Leslie, as she is in with a headache." She lowered her voice at

that, with a glance at the shaded window back of her. "Then, when I saw you, I remembered I had asked some people to luncheon—at least, I think I asked them for to-day. Anyway, you will stay!"

"I wish I could," said Grant; "but I am going back to town. I have come to say a very long good-by."

She looked up at him to see if he was in earnest, then seated herself in one of the porch chairs and pulled off her driving gloves.

"Why?" she asked, finally. "Are you going away?"

"I am going to drop off your earth," answered Grant, taking her parasol from her and examining it minutely. "I mean," he faced her with a long breath, "we have failed, my father and I, and everything we have goes in the crash. It will be public news in a day or two—of course it's deadly secret till that happens. And then for the next few years little Stephen will have no time for parties." His smile failed as it met no response.

"But—it doesn't matter very much if a man is poor," she said.

"Except to the man," he suggested. "No, I shall be at the bottom of the ladder—in ready-made clothes. I may join you again in fifteen years or so, but till then it is good-by."

"So that is why you went in for Leslie," she said, with a short laugh. The color rose in Grant's face.

"I was mean and selfish enough to think of that," he acknowledged. "Then I saw I—couldn't. It was better to let the crash come."

She did not seem to be listening.

"How much money would you have to have, not to fail?" she asked, abruptly.

"Oh, a great deal."

"Five hundred thousand dollars?"

"No—but half that."

"Two hundred and fifty thousand, then?"

"I suppose so." Grant moved restlessly under the questioning. "We were badly done by some one we trusted a year ago, and it has been a losing

struggle ever since," he added. She lifted her eyes to his for a moment.

"Whitney would lend it to you."

He rose with a laugh.

"Without security? My dear Edith, he is not such a fool; and I would not let him do it if he were. Good-by."

"Oh, it is absurd," she exclaimed, angrily, ignoring his outstretched hand. "I will not consent to it. I don't care whether you fail or not—I shall not let you go."

He still held out his hand.

"Good-by," he repeated. Suddenly she thrust both her hands into his.

"You don't care in the least," she said, in a hard, dry little voice. He stooped and pressed his face against her palms.

"Edith, my dear, I have been on the grindstone for a year, and I haven't slept for weeks, and I don't believe there is such a thing as a heart left in me. Say good-by to Leslie for me. I'm—sorry."

He waited for her to speak, but she said nothing, even when he dropped her hands and went slowly away. She turned to the house; then, her eyes falling on the shaded window, she grew pale and hurriedly pushed back the blind. But the room was empty.

A strange blurr settled over Grant's thoughts as he went down the slope to the river. He had cut his last rope, he was swimming in a golden haze of peace, and freedom, and beautiful drowsiness. He followed the path up the river, his feet stumbling, his eyes half closed. He was sorry, deeply sorry, if he had hurt any one, but he could not think of that now. The load was off his soul, he was under no need to love or to make love—dear, good Leslie! All his being warmed to her; the little antagonisms fell away—now that they no longer mattered. But he must put his head down, just for a moment.

In a forgotten corner of the Livingston grounds was an old summerhouse that had once held a straw couch. He made for it blindly, his feet ripping through the tangled grass.

"'Among green, pleasant meadows,'"

he murmured. The summerhouse stood as he remembered it, leaves and twigs deep on its broken floor. Grant threw himself down on the old couch, with his head on his arm. The sun streamed through the trees like yellow wine, the breath of the fields came up to him from cool emerald stretches beneath.

Among green, pleasant meadows,
And in a grove so wild,

The words drifted past him like an old lullaby, infinitely soothing and sweet.

And there on summer evenings
A lovely boy would rove,
To play beside the image
That sanctified the grove.

He smiled at it sleepily.

"That sanctified the grove"—the words were like cool, running water, and became confused with the dim sound of the river.

The voice came to him across long reaches of green meadow, till he opened his eyes and found it close at his side.

"The sun has gone down—I can't let you sleep here any longer. Oh, I hate to wake you!" Leslie's face was as maternally pitiful as her voice. He smiled up at her, still half confused.

"Dear, good Leslie!" A sense of her sweetness and warmth made him put out a vague hand to her. Now that he need no longer— Then he started up with a laugh.

"Where am I? How did it happen?" he exclaimed.

"I was walking, and I happened to see you here."

"Just now?"

"Oh, a few moments ago." A bird overhead chattered derisively, but Grant did not notice. He did see that Leslie looked pale and heavy-eyed.

"How is your head?" he asked.

"Rather horrid," she smiled, faintly. "I hear that you are going away," she added. He pressed his hands to his forehead.

"I shall have to take a walk, if I am going to wake up," he said. "That is the first sound sleep I have had in— Yes, I am going back to town." He

rose and held out his hand. "I wish you every good thing, Leslie."

"Thank you," she said, rather listlessly.

Grant had walked a couple of miles before his brain cleared and his senses revived from the blessed, stupefying sleep. Then it occurred to him with sudden forcefulness that he had had no luncheon and he cut across fields to the highway, hoping to get a ride home. Particularly reckless wheels far down the road suggested who might be coming, and he turned back towards the bridge with an amused memory of Edith's calm, "If he can stop the horse."

A moment later Blue Streak came round the bend in the road, and the memory became an ominous one. The horse was going in short leaps, quivering and crouching with terror, while Cooper, desperately braced in his seat, commanded in vain. Something had broken—Grant could see a long strap swinging from side to side, and at every jump it struck the trembling horse, till he was half mad with fright. There was a crashing kick and a sound of splintering, but Cooper was still in his place, giving battle with cool voice and iron nerves. Grant knew one sickening moment of reluctance; then he set his teeth and dashed across the bridge. He heard Cooper's steady: "Close to the bit! Be careful!" as he plunged blindly forward; then he knew that he had caught the reins just under the foaming mouth. The horse reared as though his dragging weight did not exist, seeming to rise endlessly; then, clearing the bridge in two bounds, he plunged suddenly to one side. Grant saw the sheer bank under him, the gleam of water on stones twenty feet below, and put forth all his strength for one last effort, even as the sound of crashing and falling told him it was useless. Then he dropped away into darkness.

VII.

"Mr. Cooper's lawyer must be sent for at once."

The message, overheard in the hall,

spread a chill of fright through the household. It was natural enough that doctors should have come flying down when the two men were carried into the house, Whitney cool and resourceful, giving occasional directions, with only a growing pallor to show what he endured, Grant a limp weight with blood on his forehead and one arm hanging. The first opinion was that Grant had come off the worst, even though it was known that he had fallen clear of the wreck, while Whitney— It was too horrible to recall. They shuddered, away from the details, and did eagerly such service as the doctors and nurses intrusted to them. And now, in the early dawn, they knew that Grant had only a broken arm and a bruised head that kept his wits wandering—while Mr. Cooper's lawyer was to come down at once.

Leslie, after hearing the order, stood for a long while at a window near Whitney's door, staring blindly at the coming day. Edith, who had been with her husband all night, white, but composed, had gone to lie down, the doctor was below taking a cup of coffee; only the nurse remained in the sick room.

"Oh, if I could, if I could!" Leslie whispered, pressing her hands together. The far-off whistle of the first train strung her to sudden courage. She pushed open Whitney's door and entered.

"Will you let me speak to Mr. Cooper a few minutes?" she asked the nurse. The woman's ready compliance made it doubly plain; evidently nothing could hurt him further.

Whitney looked up at her with a faint smile. They had always been good friends as well as cousins.

"Hello, Leslie," he said. The little everyday greeting startled her. For a moment she could not answer, though she met his eyes bravely.

"We won't talk about it, old girl," he suggested. "I really don't much mind, you know. And it wasn't the fault of my driving—anybody would have come to smash. Poor old Blue Streak!"

Leslie walked over to the window for

a moment; then she pulled a chair up beside him.

"Whitney, is your lawyer coming down to—?" Her voice faltered.

"Yes—fix up my will. There are one or two things I wanted in it."

"Will you do something for me?"

"Anything you like."

It was very hard. Leslie grew white with the effort.

"I want you to—leave two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to—Mr. Grant. I—have that much in unregistered bonds, and I'll send them to your business people to-day. No one need ever know. Oh, Whitney, please do this for me!" She broke into sudden tears, burying her face against the bed.

"But, Leslie—"

"I have plenty more, plenty! And he has lost everything. Oh, he has had such a hard time! And that much would save him. He didn't tell me—I happened to hear him say it." She lifted her head, brushing the tears away. "I would change place with you to give it to him," she whispered.

He looked away from her, frowning uneasily.

"But your father—" he began.

"He needn't know—or not for a long time. You know I manage all my affairs myself."

"But what reason could I have for—?"

"Couldn't you say it was in friendliness, because he risked his life for you? And if you get well, you can find a way to give it to him."

"Let me give it to him myself, then. Your little fortune—"

"No, no! I want to. Oh, Whitney!" Her voice fell to a tremulous whisper. "Didn't you ever care for some one who—didn't care for you?"

He looked away from her to the blank wall on the other side, and there was a long silence. Then they heard wheels, the sounds of an arrival under the open windows. He turned with a deep sigh.

"I'll do it, Leslie," he said. She kissed him and stole out of the room as the lawyer mounted the stairs.

Grant's days slipped past in vagueness. He slept, except when his arm

hurt him, and took no heed of days or nights. Once he asked if Cooper had been badly hurt, and seemed satisfied with the evasive answer given him. Cooper died three days after the accident, but it was a week more before Grant knew it, or of the legacy that had come to him. He lay all day staring silently at the news with very big and solemn thoughts, and, several times, tears in his eyes. And it was evening before it came to him that Edith was now free. He faced the idea searchingly, then laid it aside with a faint shake of his head.

"So it was only a ghost, after all," he murmured.

Then the wonderful relief of his legacy was poisoned by a new thought. How had Cooper come to leave him just that sum—the sum that he had admitted to Edith? Could it mean that he owed the money to her? His own bitterness at the idea startled him. He did not want it on those terms; he would not take it! He felt angry and humiliated.

"I won't, I won't," he muttered, vehemently.

"What is it—do you want anything?"

He turned to find Leslie beside him in the nurse's place.

"Leslie, I can't take that legacy," he burst out. She grew white with dismay.

"Oh, but why?" she faltered.

"There was just one person who knew how bitterly I needed it—the one person on earth to whom I wouldn't be under an obligation."

She had turned away so that he could not see her face.

"Will you take my word for something?" she asked, with an effort.

"Anything."

"Edith had absolutely nothing to do with it. She was entirely surprised."

Grant gave a long sigh of relief.

"Then he must have just—hit on it, poor old Whitney," he said. "Oh, Leslie, if you knew what it means to me!"

She smiled on him radiantly.

"I am so glad!" she exclaimed, then clutched at a shell comb that went slipping down over her shoulder. Grant caught it with his well hand.

"Careless little Leslie!" he said, but his eyes were not severe. It suddenly occurred to him that prim women who were always in order lacked charm. When she poured him some water and spilled a little of it, he laughed to himself. A sense of her human nearness swept over him and his heart gave a single deep throb. He smiled up at her.

"I am so glad your eyes are brown!" he said.



THEN AND NOW

WHEN I was a little child I spurned my pretty toys,
I didn't care for dolls, or games, or other nursery joys;
With jumping-jack or hobby-horse I wasn't satisfied,
I didn't like my picture books,—but for the moon I cried.

Though childhood's days have passed, dear heart, my
tastes are much the same;
I'm bored by balls and parties, I hate the social game.
I am still crying for the moon, and nothing else will do;
But now that I am older,—I want the moon—and you.

CAROLYN WELLS.

IN AND OUT OF COURT CIRCLES

By Edgar Saltus

ENGLISH society is delightfully exhilarant. There is, of course, plenty of what you call reserve. But it will hardly pay you to hunt for it in Mayfair. The inhabitants have other diversions than its exhibition. In public they are eminently austere. But informally they have amusements of their own.

We Americans have also. Divorce is one of them. Divorce is a national sport. Those who do not participate in the game like to read about it. For the ordinary romps of common people nobody of course cares a rap. But given an account of uncivil proceedings in the upper circles and general satisfaction results. Given two accounts and football is less exciting.

It is so nice, don't you think, to feel that in these regions everything is not quite as it should be. This feeling is one that moralists condemn. Yet it is perfectly natural. Our chief source of unhappiness is the happiness of other people. And *vice versa*. And there you are.

What divorces are to us, elopements are to Europeans. Those that occur among the middle classes, people of gentility necessarily ignore. But given a bolting princess and details, however prodigal, never suffice. The gentleman you are the more you will want.

The rage for this sort of thing began before bridge and motors came in. It originated in Belgium. There, or rather, as you may remember, from there, an American girl executed a *fugue* with a fiddler.

The episode was rather criticised at the time on the ground that it threatened to lessen the demand for cis-Atlantic

heiresses. The world is so censorious! But the criticism subsided, as criticism ever does. The girl, after taking a prince for better or worse, had chosen the latter. That was all there was to it. Except the result. For Clara Ward, formerly of Detroit and then of Chimay, succeeded to her own surprise and to ours in setting nothing less than a fashion.

Yes, indeed. Before the public had fully caught the lilt of her *capriccio* an infanta eloped with a painter. Presently the daughter of a king took the bit in her teeth, and, along with her, her husband's equerry. Last year a presumptive queen departed with her children's tutor. A trifle before the consort of a sovereign prince walked off with a composer. A few months ago another infanta followed suit, only, instead of a composer, she selected a soldier.

There you have an adequate representation of the liberal professions. Very liberal, we should say. You get music, painting, pedagogy and the sword. But not the pen. Which goes to show, don't you think, that either authors are not as wicked as they might be or else that they lack the chance. Yet then it is so much less fatiguing to write romances than to live them. Then, too, princesses are not literary. That, perhaps, is unfortunate for them. But not for the public. The public much prefers their escapades to their elucubrations.

At a pinch, though, their memoirs might interest. They might instruct as well. For these cases, though plural, are singular. Of course, there is nothing really novel about them. There is nothing really novel even in novels. Elopements entertained the world before the

glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome. If we remember rightly there is something on the subject in Homer. Unless we are in error there is something in Herodotus as well. Anyway, there has always been a lot going on. For that matter, no properly written history is entirely proper to read, which is the reason, of course, why the study of it is so generally neglected.

Of precedents, therefore, there is no appreciable lack. None the less, you have to hunt pretty far back for parallels for the present instances. It is only within recent years that ladies have taken to kicking over thrones. A generation ago such gymnastics were unimagined. Motives were similar, but manners were different. There was less hurrah and more circumlocution. The misadventure which occurred to Carolyne of Sayn-Wittengenstein is a case in point.

This lady, a Slav by birth, by rank a princess, and mated to a mediatized Teuton whom she detested, had the merit—by no means uncommon—of attracting Liszt. For ten years poet and princess played rhapsodies together. Then, with a view perhaps to the execution of symphonies yet more agreeable, in a perfectly orderly way she set about obtaining a divorce. As, however, she happened to be a Catholic it was necessary that the Pope should grant a dispensation. This the Pope consented to do. Her marriage to Liszt was then arranged. The altar was prepared. Everything was ready. When, at the last moment, word came that the Pope, influenced by ulterior considerations, refused.

Carolyne, as you may fancy, burst into tears. But briefly only. For presently her mediatized brute of a husband died. She was then free; free to marry, free to love. Yet not Liszt. It was that moment which he selected as the proper one to enter the Church. Ten years of rhapsodies had wearied him. Of course, he was too civil to say so. But as it afterward appeared, though civil he was cautious. Who was it said that men were deceivers ever? It was Liszt that had influenced the Pope.

Mme. de Staël declared that the realm of love is choked with tragic tales. There is one of them. The tragedy of it consists, don't you see, in the lady's quite old-fashioned regard for the *convenances*. We say *convenances* because it sounds so much more cosmopolitan than proprieties. Instead of bothering with such bagatelles, a princess nowadays would take the bull by the horns and trot off with him to the Riviera.

That was the way Louise of Belgium did. That was the way Louise of Saxony did also. It is true the one was declared insane, and the other locked up. Yet if all eloping princesses are to be treated in that manner we foresee the hour when the asylums of Europe will have to be enlarged.

A better course perhaps is the one observed in regard to the Infanta Elvire. When that young woman eloped, Don Carlos, her father, issued a pronunciamiento in which he announced that she was dead. The proceeding would have had the advantage of combining the philosophic and the dramatic had it not turned out to be both sordid and grotesque. For the lively young deceased retorted by bringing suit for the recovery of property held for her by the pronunciamiento, and to which, in view of the pronunciamiento, he maintained that she had no claim.

The humor of that so convulsed society that in the general hilarity the badness of the Bourbon beauty was more or less overlooked—a fact, parenthetically, which may have had its weight with her sister, the Infanta Alice, when she, a little since, also eloped. If not, then it may have been the example of another infanta, the Princess Isabel, who let herself down thirty feet from a window, and, by the light of the Madrilene stars, bolted with an adventurous Pole.

The couple, pursued and overtaken, are reported to have been forced into matrimony on the spot. That is a good method, too. Severe, it may be, but just. Superior, anyway, to proclaiming the delinquent's death, particularly when property is involved, for in that case, don't you think, it is but another new way of paying other old debts.

There are, though, debts of a different color. We have heard it alleged that the badness of Bourbon beauties is in the blood. We have also heard it alleged that in the case of the two Louises similar tendencies were at work. Let us see about that. These ladies are both connected with the Hapsburg House.

The House of Hapsburg once ruled the Roman roost. It ruled, too, the German Empire. But its glory has passed, its star has set, the house and the name of it are ill-omened. The name, derived from Habichtsburg, means vulture's nest. Behind it are chronicles that drip with crime, scenes smeared with sin, annals in which there is more horror than the General Sessions provide, more romance than in ballets.

Franz Josef, the head of the house, represents less sin than sorrow. His first official appearance was at a review of his army. An anarchist tried to kill him. More recently he appeared at the funeral of his wife, with whom another anarchist had succeeded better. During the intervening years he has seen Lombardy and Venetia slip from him. He has seen his primacy in the German confederation depart. He has seen the turmoils of his unrelated peoples, the revolts of Magyars and of Czechs. He has seen losses to the monarchy such as the State had not suffered since the days of Maria Theresa, and disasters comparable only to those which the Corsican ogre produced.

These things being insufficient, fate supplied more. There was his brother, Maximilian, butchered by Juarez on the plain of Queretaro. There was his son, Rudolph, battered down to death. There was his wife whom an obscure reptile murdered.

One has to go back to the heroic age, to the old tragedies of the Greek dramatists, to find a king pursued by Nemesis as relentlessly as he. No sovereign of modern times has supped on horrors so protractedly. One after another, brother, son and wife were taken from him. The first by a bullet, the second by a bottle, the third by a beast. That the bomb which explodes in the path of emperors has been absent from his own

is due perhaps to one of fate's refinements—that, living, he might suffer more.

To-day, haggard and weary, on his wretched throne, the old man sits. That bit of furniture in lieu of a comfort has been a curse. So malefic is its influence that it has projected blights, parabolating them into Italy, farther yet into Spain, farther still in the South Pacific, beneath whose waters is supposed to lie the lost archduke who called himself John Orth.

It is at the steps of this throne that Louise of Saxony lost her earliest illusions. It is from this throne that Louise of Belgium fled. To ascribe the influences at work in these women to its maleficence would be dramatic, if you like, but hardly exact. You have to look further than that, you have to look into anatomy, and beyond it into psychology, and more remotely still, into the recesses of the feminine heart. It is there the causes lie. And they lie there wrapped in a syllogism at once complex and simple, in the fact, undeniable yet rarely admitted, that nothing earthly has ever prevented a woman from having the fantasies, temptations and impulses of her sex.

Look at the Princess Bess. This lady, it has been said, shot and, if you please, killed an actress with whom her husband—her own husband, not the actress—was taking tea. She did not begin there, either. She shot a servant who opposed her entrance to the villa where the tea drinking was going on. The story may be untrue, if so, it is all the more interesting. Anyway, it is quaint. Though not, perhaps, in the best of taste. A well-bred woman never sees anything that was not intended for her. Yet however well-bred a woman may be, she may be also but a woman with a heart—a heart which she must break or yield to, in default perhaps of doing both.

There are impulses that nothing can restrain, and the impulses that excited so potently a woman of the position of this princess, have incited and will incite women of similar position to actions equally if otherwise quaint.

To impulses of this kind women generally, ordinary women that is, omit to yield. But ordinary women are not royals. The latter are taught to believe that they are not of common clay. From which, of course, the deduction follows that, being of superior manufacture, they are, as such, delivered from the compunctions of the herd.

In court circles that idea is axiomatic. In ordinary circles there is another quite as much so. It is that those who, fancying themselves above humanity, act on that fancy, beneath humanity are bound to fall. That has been the case with these women. Were it otherwise, their example might have demoralized society. See what society has been spared!

Society, you know, stands for the world at large. That is so obliging. In itself it is a sort of freemasonry. The lodges vary in luxury, in location, and, occasionally, in license. They differ in degree. But not in design. That design is the enjoyment of life.

Of this enjoyment a part consists first in setting the fashions and then in following them. From which you may see what might have occurred had the fashion set by the ex-Mme. de Chimay, and so diligently followed by royals, resulted other than it has. Society would have gone mad, or rather, it would have gone madder—if that be possible—than it actually is.

But not a bit of it. The croppers which one and all of these ladies took set another fashion. It is modish now to be domestic, or if you cannot quite be that, then to be decently divorced. But not to be domestic in the homes of other people, not to run off, get your picture in the papers, be declared insane, shut up in a retreat or pronunciamientoed dead.

No, indeed. To employ an engaging aphorism, that is too much pork for a shilling. Hence, therefore, perhaps the diversions of Mayfair. Hence, too, perhaps the popularity of our national game.

That is all quite as it should be. "Earth," said Browning, "returns through whole centuries of noise and sin." So it does. But not society. At least not society as it is constituted to-day. Sin it may or may not abhor. But it objects to noise. It disapproves of scandal.

In earlier epochs such disapproval would have been thought very oppressive. Now it is accepted as quite the thing. It will be seen, therefore, how society is improving. In ascending the centuries it has become eminently conservative.

Yet in view of our national sport one may wonder whether that conservatism will be locally conserved. On that score, however, our fears are few. Society may stand for the world, but the world does not stand for society.



CONVALESCENCE

I AM come back from lands of endless shadow,
Far drowsy lands of shifting, drifting streams—
Fields of blown poppies thro' soft twilights gleaming;
And dreams!

And I am come to lands of ceaseless clamor,
Blazing of sun, and rush of loud winds' strife;
Clashing of voices; surging of strong men onward;
And life!

M. BLAKE.

THE DIARY OF A SOCIETY PARASITE

By Geraldine Bonner

JAN. 1. This is the first of the year, and upon this clean, unsullied page I will put down my good resolutions:

To keep up the appearance of wealth upon an income of one hundred and seventy-five dollars a month, to make every one pay for the privilege of my valuable society, to get as much out of the world as it will give—and the world I belong to can be made to give a lot if you know how to twist its tail—and to give as little as I can myself.

All these things have I done, from my youth up like the young man in the Bible. The difference is that I'm going to do them better now than I ever did before. Heretofore I've been led away by impulse to do things that don't add to the successful progress of a spinster with nothing on the credit side of her books but good looks and the income of thirty-five thousand dollars. So good-by to my generous impulses! Good-by, you poor, little ineffectual foolish things that only block the way to success! Good-by, good-by! I'm really a bit sorry to part with you, but you do clog the wheels of my car too much! Good-by!

Then I am reaching that stage when one must think about the future. I was thirty on the sixth of October, and all the world is aware of it. That's the worst of belonging to the fine old Knickerbocker family of Van Gryse. Of course, I'm never truthful about it. No self-respecting woman is; but it does violence to my artistic conscience to have to tell a lie that every one knows is a lie. Aunt Sara has an affectionate

way of saying, "Thirty, Angelica, and not married yet? Dear, dear, how times are changing! In my day an unmarried woman of thirty was an old maid and wore a cap."

Aunt Sara has many trying ways. With her house full of servants, and her diamond rings, and her millions, she never gives me more on Christmas than fifty dollars when she knows what I've got to run a flat on, not to speak of dressing like a Christian, and giving Cousin Clementina enough to eat in return for the task of chaperoning me.

Jan. 3. Slept late this morning, and Clementina brought me my coffee in bed. After living with her nearly two years I have come to the conclusion that Cousin Clementina is that rare, domestic animal, searched for by all men, and by many believed to be extinct as the Dodo—an unselfish woman.

When I asked her to come and live with me the family said she might just as well pack her trunks and go to the poorhouse at once, I'd got so little money. But she said she wasn't afraid, and that she'd known my mother and would like to try living with Mary's daughter. She's told me a good deal about my mother who was a bride when Clementina came out of the virgin wilds of New England to settle among her New York relations. I rather fancy my mother was the only one of them who was kind to her. I wonder what my mother would think of me?

Jan. 5. Out to a concert last night at the Blakes, those barbaric Western millionaire people who come from somewhere, where they struck a mine in their

back garden or front lawn and took out mountains of silver in a year. They are now in the stage where they ask people they don't know to dinner. The only son, Tony, is said to have a strong predisposition toward me. So I put on my yellow chiffon trimmed with the gold paillettes—I bought it cheap from Eleanor McTavish when she went into mourning—in which I am supposed to look very nice. I thought I did, but a Western man I met there talked to me over an hour, all the time looking at me as if he did not know whether I was black or white. Most of the Westerners one meets are more New Yorky than the oldest inhabitant—*plus royalist que le roi*. This one was quite raw and interesting. His name is Masters.

Jan. 7. For two days Cousin Clementina and Ellen Eliza, the pampered menial, who administers to our material wants for the monthly stipend of fifteen dollars, say the place has been infested with people with bills. As there is no angel with a flaming sword to guard our entrance I went out early and stayed all day.

Jan. 9. Bought a new hat this morning at Cecile's. I had an inspiration and told the girl to send the bill to Aunt Hilda. There are two possibilities; one that she may think it hers and pay it without a murmur, and one that when she gives it to me and sees a look of misery darken the radiance of my countenance she may be impelled to offer to pay it. Either are worth risking. Desperate ills require desperate remedies, as somebody says who tried to live in New York and "go out" on the income of thirty-five thousand dollars.

Jan. 10. I stayed away most of today, too. Thank fortune the season is so lively! I have four invitations for dinner next week, and three for lunch. That ought to save something. Ellen Eliza came to me this morning, and said she was freezing to death in her bed because she had not enough covers. I gave her the fur-lined cloak Aunt Sara gave me last spring when the moths got into it. Cousin Clementina got the moths out, but in the process made the cloak smell so dreadfully that I'd rather

have had the moths. So I gave it to Clementina. I didn't want to take it back from her, but the only other thing we could give Ellen Eliza was one of the drawing-room portières, and Clementina said it was less trouble to take the cloak than to have to unhook the portière every night.

Jan. 12. Cousin Clementina and Ellen Eliza are economizing, they tell me. I trust they are not carried away by their imaginations in making this statement. They say the provision bill last week came to five dollars. What do you suppose they had to eat?

I haven't taken any meal at home but breakfast for a week. When I don't get an invitation for lunch in a direct and legitimate way I forage for one. Yesterday I had none. So I went out and pretended to shop all up and down Twenty-third Street for an hour. I met four women I knew, one of whom I detested and one who is the worst bore in New York. But I only had three dimes and a nickel in my purse, and what's a girl to do with the wolf at the door that way? I greeted them all like a sister, and even went and shopped with the bore, who was buying a pair of leggins for an infant—and not one of them asked me to lunch!

At one o'clock I had an aching void inside me which, if not as deep as a well or as wide as a church door, was enough, 'twould serve to make me do desperate acts. I walked up the avenue thinking that if the worst came to the worst I could go to Aunt Louise's. But I just dropped into the Althorp with a faint hope at my heart, and there, sitting at a table, was Maud Blake, who would give her biggest diamond to be seen lunching with Miss Angelica Van Gryse. Miss Van Gryse drifted toward her as if bound for another table, paused, said a word of greeting, dropped into a vacant seat as if unconsciously, demurred when Miss Blake feverishly pressed her to lunch with her, and finally consented. It was the best lunch I'd had for a week.

Jan. 13. A thrifty day. Lunch at the Lincolns, tea at the Farleighs, dinner and opera with the Van Twillers.

I had to have a coupé one way only, as the Van Twillers sent me home in their carriage. Met that Western man, Harvey Masters, at the Farleighs. He again looked at me as if he didn't know whether I was black or white. Miss Angelica Van Gryse is not used to that sort of thing, and doesn't think she likes it.

Jan. 14. Went out early to-day, and lunched with Aunt Sara. With some difficulty I induced her to give me her Verni-Martin screen. There is a corner of the sitting-room that still looks bare, and I have thought for some time the screen would fill it up nicely. Afterward paid three calls, and then went to the Mynderts to a reception. I always get my dinners at receptions if I don't happen to have a regular engagement. If you know how to do it you can get an excellent dinner, only it's not always easy to have it properly served in courses. The waiter will pile it all upon one plate. I met my Western man again—he's a cousin of Mrs. Myndert, which accounts for his appearance in the inner sanctums this way—and he offered to get me "some refreshments," as he called the solid meal I was about to make.

Under my direction he brought a cup of bouillon, oysters à la poulette, sweetbread patties, a bird and some salad. I was hungry, and I ate it all. After a while the simple, unsophisticated creature said:

"It's so jolly to see any one eat as if they were hungry in New York."

He little knew I was providing myself against the long, lean hours that stretch from six in the evening till nine the next morning.

"Oh, I'm always hungry," I said, with my most naïve air. "It's not the fashion, I know, but I'm not in the least a fashionable person."

"Aren't you?" he said, looking at me in surprise. "My cousin told me the other evening when I first met you that you were a typical society girl."

What a fool that Myndert woman is! Typical society girl! She'll be calling her cousin a "gent" next.

"What do you think about it?" I

asked, peering around for a waiter to get me a *demi tasse*.

"I don't know," he said; "I've never seen a typical society girl in my life, and I was wondering if I really was talking to one at last."

"Did you want to see one?" I inquired; rather curious.

"Yes," he answered; "it's always interesting to meet new kinds of people."

"Well, I hope you're not disappointed," I said, seeing a waiter at last and signaling to him.

And that impudent raw Westerner looked at me with a cold, considering eye, and said:

"Well, I don't know. I haven't made up my mind yet."

Jan. 16. Tony Blake came to me again this afternoon. It is the second time in a week. Things are beginning to look menacing. He sent me flowers four times last month. He has numberless millions, and is just six years younger than I am, so, according to the laws that govern modern life, he is my rightful mate. I wonder if he is! I don't feel that joy at the thought which a right-minded spinster of small means and advanced years should experience.

Jan. 18. Lunched at Aunt Hilda's with Aunt Sara and Aunt Louise, and told about Tony Blake quite innocently, as one into whose white maiden soul the thought of marriage has never entered. My aunts were shaken to their hearts' cores, for they are very anxious to see me "comfortably settled." The phrase does not strike me as a very happy one to apply to Tony and myself. I should think it would be a question of which one of us would make the other most uncomfortable.

"Is that one of those strange people from Idaho, or Alaska, or Arizona, or somewhere out there, who are building a house after the model of Windsor Castle on the Riverside Drive?" said Aunt Louise.

I admitted it was.

"Are they not very wealthy?" said Aunt Hilda, with an air of suppressing criticisms on the Blakes.

I admitted that soft impeachment, too.

"Is this young man a presentable person?" Aunt Sara asked.

"They say he has five millions already settled on him by his father," I answered.

Was it necessary to say more?

"It is true," said Aunt Louise, solemnly. "I have heard that though they began life by digging in mines, they are not at all impossible people. One can quite afford to know them."

After that the aunts talked seriously to me, and I listened meekly. I enjoyed it, and told it all to Clementina when she came to sit on the foot of my bed last night. Clementina has a point of view that must have originated in the days of the mammoths and the mastodons. She said, when I'd finished:

"But, Angelica, dear, you don't love this young man?"

"Clementina," I said, and kicked her through the bedclothes, "you belong to the period of Pre-Glacial man. Go to bed."

Jan. 20. Yesterday was one of those dark days that now and then occur when you fully expect the heavens to roll up like a scroll and the earth to consume away in fire. I had to buy my lunch! I went into Wessel's, and sat on a stool at a counter and ordered a cup of chocolate and ate quantities of bread and butter, which is free. But why dwell on this sad occasion?

Jan. 21. Just come home from a dinner at the Mynderts, where I sat next their cousin, Harvey Masters, the man from the West. I think he is beginning to know whether I am black or white. He comes from the same place that the Blakes do, knew them well there, and said they were "first-rate people."

"Yes," I agreed, with deprecating pride, for I feel a sort of proprietary interest in Tony, "the son, Tony Blake, is not at all a bad fellow."

"Tony!" he exclaimed, and then he laughed. "Oh, poor little Tony! He's all right, but nobody ever counts Tony. I meant his parents."

It was a new point of view, and rather staggering. Most people who know the old Blakes say they would be

quite impossible if they hadn't such a good *chef*.

"The crowd that goes to their house and eats their dinners doesn't understand them," he went on. "You have to have some brains and character to understand old Blake—he's some one. And, and his wife—well, it takes a real woman to appreciate her."

"She did washing for the miners when she was young, didn't she?" I asked, and I looked at him with a cold, sarcastic smile, which, combined with my statement of Mrs. Blake's beginnings, was intended to crush him.

It didn't a bit. Instead he seemed rather pleased that I knew about the washing episode, and answered, quite eagerly:

"Yes, twice. Once when they were newly married and they had only his pay as a miner, and afterward when he had his first upset. She said it was all she could do to help him. Fine of her, wasn't it?"

"And now she's being butchered to make a Roman holiday here in New York," I said.

He thought I was serious, and answered:

"That's it precisely. A lot of people no better educated than she, with not half as much natural refinement, go to her house, sit at her table, get anything they can out of her, and then go away and laugh at her. Some of them would actually live on her if they dared. There are more shameless 'beats' in this city than any place I've ever been in."

"Oh, do you *really* think there are?" I said, turning on him a look of bright girlish deprecation, as of one who can hardly believe in the frailties of human nature.

"That's the way it strikes me," he answered. "But surely you must have seen lots of it. You were born here."

"Yes," I admitted, "I'm one of the aborigines. And perhaps that's why I don't know more about it. People don't notice things that have always been a part of their surroundings."

"Well," he answered, "I suppose that's true. But I don't see how any

one as clever as you could have helped noticing it."

I blushed, *moi qui vous parle!* I haven't done such a thing for years. I thought I'd lost the art, and it was quite encouraging to feel that I hadn't. I don't know why I did it, either. There's something very self-sufficing about that Mr. Masters.

Jan. 22. Felt blue to-day. It was very wet; perhaps that was the reason. I had to take a hansom to go to lunch at Aunt Louise's. When I got there I told the hansom man I'd no change to pay him with, and went in and borrowed the money from Aunt Louise. I've done it several times before; fortunately, Aunt Louise has a very bad memory. It was a lunch of eighteen women, all talking at once. There was a time when large miscellaneous collections of my own sex amused me. That golden age is passed. Even dinners sometimes bore me now. I've had so much of society that I feel the day is not far distant when I'll drop off gorged. What will happen to me when I get toward forty and have to keep on, with my collar bones showing and crow's-feet round my eyes, and girls, now at schools, saying, when they see me, "Oh, there's poor old Angelica Van Gryse. How scraggy she's getting!"

There is no doubt about it, I *have* got the blues to-night, I'll stop. *Bonne nuit—buenos noches—gute nacht*—what is the word I want? Oh, yes—good-night!

Jan. 23. Bright afternoon. Went out and had tea at Mrs. Schuylkill's. Ethel Schuylkill told me I "looked worn." Nasty cat! She's never forgiven me since the Lorimers' ball, when she said to me, "Did I hear Lord Montserrat say, when I entered the room, 'Is that the handsome Miss Schuylkill?'" and I answered, "Yes, dear, but he put the accent on the 'that!'" My aunts have begun to hear of Tony's devotion from other people, and they are getting feverish about it. Of course I ought to marry him. I suppose that is why I daily grow more averse to the idea.

Jan. 24. Being Sunday, spent the afternoon at home, and was, of course,

caught by Tony. He was sucking the end of his cane and staring at me with his eyes full of the coming proposal, when who should come in but that son of the Golden West, Mr. Masters. He said I asked him to come. I dare say I did, but I never supposed he'd think I meant it. I never mean any of the nice things I say, and of course I expect people to understand that. Still, he had his uses, for he put a stop to the proposal, which is bottled up again for a week or two. He really talks very well. One would never think he and Tony came from the same place. I wonder if it's because I'm getting to know him better that Tony looks so mean and small and seems so desperately dull. I didn't find him so bad at first.

Jan. 24. Snowstorm this afternoon. Stayed in and dined at home. That's the second time this month. It wasn't bad at all; in fact, it was lots of fun. Ellen Eliza's getting to be a good cook. If she had anything but ham and eggs to practice on I think she'd be a wonder.

After dinner, in a moment of confidence, I told Clementina I couldn't imagine why she liked living with me, and she said she liked it very much. She said she felt as if I was her daughter.

"I'm sure, Clementina," I said, "if you'd had a daughter she'd have been a great deal better brought up and less mercenary than I am."

"Well," said Clementina, "I don't know about that, but I do know she couldn't have had a better heart."

No one ever said anything like that to me before.

Jan. 25. Went to dinner at the Mortimer-Jones, and met Mr. Masters there. He sat next to Mabel Jones, who is a silly, pretty little thing of nineteen. I should think he'd find her insipid, but he didn't seem to. I wonder if he thinks I'm altogether too self-sufficing and independent. I'm not really half as independent as people think. Some of it I learned and some of it I pretended. I don't believe there was much in the beginning. Tony told me the other day that his father "thought the world of Harvey Masters." He's an engineer,

and he's done lots of work for old Blake. He's going out West again in May to build a tunnel in a mine of old Blake's. I wonder if the West is really so awful.

Jan. 28. I was attacked by a fit of temporary insanity to-day, and spent five unnecessary dollars. Two men have opened a wretched little florist shop near our corner, and I don't think sold so much as a *boutonnière* for a week. I got so wrought up by seeing their poor, dejected faces staring out of the window in hopes of a customer, that I went in and bought five dollars' worth of violets. I was far from normal when I perpetrated this rash act, but I couldn't help it. Gave the violets to Ellen Eliza, who is going to a "social" this evening.

Jan. 29. Tony sent a box of American beauties at three, came to call at five. I wouldn't see him. I'm going to keep off that miserable proposal as long as I can. I've had six genuine offers and about a dozen unmade offers from men who would have liked nothing better than to marry me, but were frightened of me because I was so much cleverer than they were, so handsome and so extravagant. They've all married girls that they thought safe, stupid and economical, and that they didn't like half as much as they did me. Such is life! I thought myself distractedly in love with three of them, and half in love with two. Now, from the stored experience of thirty years, I know I never was in love with any one of them. There is nothing pleasant or placid about being truly in love. You can't secure the beloved object with a pin, and then amuse yourself by watching him squirm. No, you yourself are apt to do the squirming. Where did I learn all this? It just burst out of me full grown, the way Minerva burst out of her father's head.

Jan. 30. Out all day. Found a lot of cards, among them the Westerner's. Glad I missed him.

Jan. 31. Went to call on Mabel Jones. Found her with two other girls, and in about ten minutes Mr. Masters dropped in. When I got up to go he

went, too, and out in the street asked me if he could walk home with me. Fortunately I had on my new squirrel skin stole and toque, that I really look quite nice in. I asked him if he'd seen the picture of me in the Sunday *Clarion*, and he said he had, and seemed annoyed about it, not a bit amused, as I thought he would be. He said he didn't see what business they had printing my picture. It ought to be prohibited by law. I wish he would not make me feel that some of the things I do are dreadful and degrading. He began to talk about people that he called "parasites" who "lived on society," and he spoke of them as if they were sneak thieves and ought to be put in the Tombs. He seems to despise the things I have always thought a lot of and tried to get, and the worst of it is he seems to think that I despise them, too. I suppose if he knew the way I've maneuvered and managed he'd regard me as if I was a sneak thief.

Feb. 2. Two men to call. Missed them both, thank goodness! One was Sandy McAllister, who last year was quite in love with me, and gave me a lamp for Christmas. No one who has not been poor can appreciate the anguish one suffers when one knows the offerings of possible givers are going to take the form of candy and flowers—or books. Books are the worst! There is something enraging in getting *éditions de luxe*, when you are in absolute need of dinner plates, and the kindling wood is all out. I wonder if society will ever be reconstructed on principles of reason, and a gentleman may be permitted to present a lady with something useful, like a kitchen stove or a ton of coal? Yet when Sandy McAllister gave me that lamp, my aunts were quite scandalized, and wanted me to give it back. I didn't, of course. Nor did I tell them Sandy had given it to me because I told him gas was so expensive and I was longing for a lamp! I didn't think it was necessary to go into details. I feel ashamed of these things now; and just a month or two ago I thought them so clever. It's queer the way I've changed.

Feb. 3. There was a veiled announcement in yesterday's *Town Crier* of my engagement to Tony. I took lunch with Aunt Hilda, who had seen it and told me there should be no more delay about announcing it. Didn't sleep last night. I think I'm ill.

Feb. 4. Harvey Masters here this evening. I thought it odd for him to call in the evening. I wish he'd stay away. He makes me feel small and mean, and I am worried enough already over this affair with Tony. I wish I could marry him and have done with it; but every day I seem to dislike it more. I feel like that woman in the play—"Nothing but his being my husband could make me like him less."

Feb. 6. Rain all day; a heavy, straight, gray rain. Came home after lunch, and sat in my window looking out. There was nothing to see but the sky the color of lead and bulging with clouds, and acres upon acres of tin roofs gleaming with wet. New York is the gloomiest place in the world on a rainy day. I was thinking of the description Mr. Masters gave me of the prairies in the rain—a huge, flat expanse without a human figure breaking the loneliness and the storms marching solemnly across it. It was a place where, he said, you realized how small you were, only a tiny point of life creeping between the floor of the earth and the roof of the sky. I have felt that way at sea, looking out from the captain's bridge at sunset.

It must have been the rain and thinking so long that made me so blue. I had that same bleak, deadly feeling I used to have as a child when I first went to school, and afterward, when the other girls went home for the holidays, and I had to stay in school because I had nowhere to go.

You poor little girl! Poor little, dreary, ugly thing! Nobody knows but you and me what that first quarter at school was. And nobody knows but us two how you learned to hide your tears and to be smart and laugh when you felt so sore and lonely because no one ever came to see you or took you home. And how you finally could bid

the other girls good-by for the holidays, making jokes and laughing all the while. But afterward you used to creep into a corner of the attic and cry, and cry, and cry.

Feb. 7. Tony came. Said I was out. Mr. Masters came half an hour later, and I said I was in, and saw him. Clementina was shocked, and told me I was treating Tony badly. I don't care! I don't care! I don't care!

Feb. 8. Lent's coming, and things are very lively. I have a lot of invitations, and I accept all I can so that I may be out when Tony comes. I met the Westerner at the Bullocks' reception yesterday. Does he go to these places to meet me? There's a constraint over us both. I think—what's the use of thinking? At thirty years of age one knows better than to think.

Feb. 10. Had a *séance* with Aunt Louise and Aunt Sara. They openly attacked me on the subject of Tony. They told me every one was talking of his visits and attentions. Why did I not announce my engagement? I hesitated, and felt shy and embarrassed. I'm losing my nerve—my nerve that a boarding-school training and the life of a society parasite have taught me! And I suddenly whimpered out that I didn't see how I was to marry Tony Blake, because I didn't love him. That was a statement to come from me! The aunts were naturally enough amazed by it. Aunt Louise just stared, but Aunt Sara, who has never been one to mince matters, said:

"And do you think, Angelica, that at thirty years of age that should stand in the way of your marrying a man of great wealth and good character?"

And I heard myself answering to that:

"Yes, Aunt Sara; I find that at thirty it stands in the way just exactly as much as it would have done at twenty."

They expressed themselves freely after that. Aunt Sara got quite angry, and spoke of my strange character and manner of living, almost unladylike in its independence. I reminded them of Cousin Clementina, but they waived Cousin Clementina aside as though she

was a shadow. I always had been a hard person to manage, even when I was a child.

Well, it ended, anyway, and I came out of Aunt Louise's big house feeling my face burning and my hands shaking inside my muff. I walked up from street to street through the freezing evening, saying over and over to myself:

"I can't—I can't—no woman with any decency could! I can't do it! I can't!"

Before I'd realized it, I'd walked to the flat. I went up in the elevator, and opened the door with my key, and as I came into the little hallway I heard a man's voice in the sitting-room. It was his. My heart gave a jump and I felt a sort of mad joy take hold of me. Oh, I mustn't write any more. I'd write crazy things. Oh, why didn't some one bring me up better when I was little? Oh, why didn't some one stop me from living a "beat," and teach me how to be a simple, good, high-minded woman, that a real man could love?

Feb. 11. I felt sobered down and chilled this morning when I woke up. Clementina brought me my coffee in bed, and said I looked ill. It was raining again. The rain makes a drumming on the roof outside my window that's the dreariest noise in the world. I'd heard it all night, and kept thinking of a line somewhere in a poem, "In the dead, unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof." The person who wrote that had evidently lain awake thinking, too, on wet nights. I wonder if he was trying to make up his mind to marry five millions with a foolish youth attached to it, or to pass on to spinster middle age brightened only by the income of thirty-five thousand dollars?

Everything seems dust and ashes, the rest of my life as dreary as the rain on the roof.

Feb. 12. Went to the opera with Aunt Hilda. I was unusually gay and bright, and felt inside as if an iron hand had a tight grip on my heart. There's one person in the world that there's no use telling lies to—yourself.

I've tried it, and I've found it's no good. Oh, Angelica! Angelica!

Feb. 13. Clementina came to me this morning, and told me she'd saved twenty-five dollars out of the house money. She said she wanted me to buy a new hat with it. I said I didn't see that I needed a new hat, and she said that she didn't see that I did, either, but she thought it would cheer me up. Both she and Ellen Eliza had noticed my depression. So everybody can see it!

Feb. 15. He came yesterday evening when I was at the theatre. What does he come for? Does he care? Does he care? If he doesn't care, why does he come? Of course he doesn't care. What a fool I am! And just my luck to miss him!

Feb. 18. I met him this afternoon, suddenly, unexpectedly, just as I was turning the corner from the Schuylkyls into Madison Avenue. He didn't say anything for a minute. He was pale. I must have been, too; anyway, I felt pale and I stammered some commonplaces, about being sorry to miss him, when he interrupted me, and said, without stammering a bit, that he'd heard I was engaged to Tony Blake. I looked down on the ground, and said I'd heard so myself.

"Is it true?" he asked, staring at me, not this time as if he didn't know whether I was black or white, but as if he didn't know anything except that I was I and he was he.

"It's not true." He gave a sort of gasp, and I looked at him, and saw that he'd forgotten Madison Avenue and the electric cars and the Schuylkyls, who, I've no doubt, had their noses pressed against the windows watching us, and he just only knew he and I were in the world alone, so I dropped my eyes again, and said, softly, "Yes."

I suppose it was mean of me. But I was trembling all over, my lips, too—and I have my pride!

Without another word he took off his hat, turned on his heel, and started off, walking fast down the avenue. And I started in the opposite direction. I think I walked fast, too, but I don't remember. When I got to the flat I

wouldn't wait for the elevator, but ran upstairs and into the hall, and found Clementina in the kitchen ironing something. I kissed her. Then I remembered that Ellen Eliza had a "beau," and I kissed her, too, and asked her how her "beau" was. And Clementina and Ellen Eliza said they hadn't seen me in such good spirits for a month.

Feb. 19. I was sitting in my room at tea time this afternoon, when Clementina came in and said Tony was in the drawing-room.

"He's come to propose, Clementina," I said, and we looked at one another with guilty terror.

"Yes," said Clementina, tremulously, "he's been coming to do that for three weeks. Shall I go in and tell him it's no use?"

"Clementina," I answered, "you came here to live on cold ham and weak tea, and to be my chaperon. But there was nothing in the arrangement about your refusing my offers of marriage. What you can do is to interrupt us in ten minutes—ten minutes by the clock. Come in and say something, anything, but come in. If you're later you'll find me lying unconscious on the floor with Tony whispering in my ear like the man in the story."

Clementina had no idea how nervous I was. All of a sudden I knew what I was going to say to Tony, and it was an upsetting thing to do.

I went in, and found him sitting by the fireplace with his hat in his hand, and looking pale, and meager, and very young. He started up as he saw me, and said, without any preamble:

"Angelica, you're so hard to find! I've been here so often! I sometimes think you don't want to see me."

"Tony," I answered, "I want to see you often and I like to see you always, but I was afraid you were going to ask me to marry you, and so I said I wasn't at home."

"Angelica!" he gasped, looking perfectly amazed.

But I went on, and it was the hardest thing I ever said to any one in my life:

"I know, Tony, you probably hadn't

the least intention of doing so. But I'd just got that idea into my head, and so I *was* avoiding you, because I couldn't, some way or other, think of marrying you."

"Angelica!" he exclaimed, and this time he spoke pleadingly, and looked younger than ever.

"I know just what you're going to say," I interrupted, "you never had such an idea. That's quite possible. But you know, women—vain ones like me—are always thinking men are in love with them who are not, and I thought you were in love with me. So did my aunts, and they wanted me to marry you. And I wanted to myself, at first. That is—I wanted to—because—because—of the money. Yes, Tony, I was that kind of a person. It's horrible to have to own it, but—but—what's the good of pretending? And I owe it to you. Whether you cared or not you've been kind to me"—the ten minutes were nearly up, and the perspiration was out on my forehead, and my tongue was dry—"and now I've told it to you."

"But—why—why," he stammered, "did you change your mind?"

"Because I met some one I really cared for—you might say loved, I think. It's so different to love a person and to like them. I never knew there was such a difference before. Oh, Tony, you ought to be glad that it was all a mistake, and you never wanted to marry me, and I never was in love with you. Think what you've escaped! I'd have always stayed the same mercenary 'beat' if I hadn't met some one that woke up something—what was it? A heart?—that had never been stirred before."

I heard Clementina's step in the hall. I felt as if I would have liked to put my arms round Tony and kiss him, he looked so boyish and crushed, and the hat in his hand was trembling like a leaf. Clementina came in quaking, and saying something about tea, but I caught her by the sleeve, and held her for fear she'd leave us. Tony left a moment after. He didn't pretend to any good-bys or society phrases. Men don't know how to do that sort of thing. It takes a woman to smile when she feels

like dust and ashes inside. Clementina saw him out, and I fell down on the sofa and hid my head in the cushions. When she came back I thought she was going to upbraid me, but she didn't. Clementina knows a great deal about human nature, wherever she learned it.

Feb. 21. Went to Aunt Sara's, and fought it out to the last ditch. But it doesn't matter—nothing matters! Nothing counts!

I saw him as I came down the steps. He was walking quickly up the avenue, his eyes down, evidently thinking; and as I looked at him he seemed to know it, raised his eyes, and they looked straight into mine. He turned pale, and came toward me, as I stood on the bottom step waiting for him. Before he spoke, quite suddenly, I knew my fate was to be decided that afternoon, that hour, and I knew I should decide it myself.

As he raised his hat I said to him, before he could speak:

"Will you drive home to my flat with me now? I want to show you something."

There wasn't anything gay or joyous about either of us. He looked gravely, almost sternly, at me as if he were measuring me, and said yes. He hailed a hansom that was passing, and got in. For a time we drove along in silence.

"What do you think I'm going to show you?" I suddenly asked him.

"I can't imagine," he answered.

"The way I live," I said; "you'll find it a surprise."

That was all we said till we reached the flat. Then we went up in the elevator, and I opened the door with my key. I remembered that Clementina was out shopping and Ellen Eliza was in the basement washing the clothes. For a moment I stood silently in the middle of the drawing-room pulling off my gloves and trying to find the right words to begin with, and then I gave it up and began with any words, not waiting or pausing to choose:

"You think, no doubt, Mr. Masters, that I'm a proud and high-souled woman, who has plenty of money to pay her bills and always does so, and never tried in her refined and unselfish exist-

ence to beat her way or 'do' her friends."

He looked surprised, and said:

"I think you are Angelica Van Gryse, the most beautiful and charming woman in New York."

"That's just what I thought you'd say," I answered. "Well, look around you—it's a pretty room, isn't it? All furnished by a judicious and skillful system of 'beating.' Those ornaments on the mantelpiece and that silver box came from a man called Floyd, who—who—got quite fond of me, and I think, thought I was going to marry him. He gave me lots of presents and—and I couldn't make up my mind to marry Floyd, but I never sent the presents back. The sofa pillows were all wrung out of different girls. The sofa and the divan I *made* Aunt Hilda give me. She's the most generous of all my aunts. I've done much more with her than with the others. The clock came from Uncle Horace because I was always late to dinner at his house and told him it was because I had no clock. Sandy McAllister gave me the lamp because I told him gas was too high, and I couldn't afford to buy a lamp. And—and—once there was a rumor got out—I didn't start it; every word I'm telling is true—that I was engaged to a man from Florida, who I'd only met a few times. But people heard it, and several of them sent me teacups and things for my tea table. The table looked so pretty that—I—kept them, and the man went back to Florida and never heard a thing about it."

He turned away, and looked out of the window. It was sickening, but I went on:

"Now, that's about all in the drawing-room. Come, and I'll show you the rest."

He hung back, but I said: "Oh, please come. I'll never be able again in my life to say these things. It's the confession of all my past. You don't know how hard it is. Please come."

So he came. We went along the passage, and I threw open the door of my room.

"That's my room," I said, motioning

him to look in, but he drew back from the threshold against the wall of the passage; "it *had* to be quite nice, because I had to show people into it now and then. The eiderdown I got from Mrs. Van Twiller. I—I—complained just before Christmas of having rheumatism. I hadn't it at all. I never had it in my life. That's one of the things I did that lie heaviest on my conscience. I—I even once, when I was there, pretended to walk lame. And the pier glass Aunt Sara gave me when I said I'd broken mine. And I had, but it was only a hand glass, and Aunt Sara thought it was a long one."

"I'm going back to the drawing-room," he said, turning round; "I came here to see you, not to look at Aunt Sara's pier glass."

"No—you must come on," I cried, and this time I caught him by the arm, and pulled him along the passage.

"Here's Clementina's room," I said, flinging open the door. "You see it's got nothing in it but an iron bed and a washstand, and a bureau made out of a packing box and covered with cretonne. Clementina has to keep the fur-lined cloak on her bed because she's not got enough covers. I don't think Clementina always gets enough to eat, either. The bills are nothing. I take my meals out. I don't get them here. Half the time there isn't enough, and they're so bad. I—I—beat my meals out of people, too."

"Haven't you nearly told it all?" he said. "I want to go back to the drawing-room and sit on Aunt Hilda's sofa and talk. There are several things I want to say, and I haven't had any kind of a chance."

"Oh, no, I'm not done yet," I cried, feverishly, "come!" And I led him farther down the passage.

"There's the dining-room! There are only four chairs, a sideboard and a table in it, and they belong to Clementina. There's some small silver, a few spoons and forks, that belonged to my mother, in the drawers. I sold the large pieces once when a tailor threatened to sue me for his bill. And here's Ellen Eliza's room."

"Ellen Eliza!" he said, drawing back. "I really don't think it's fair of you to ask me to look into the rooms of these strange ladies."

"Just this one," I implored, and I threw open that door. In the garish light of afternoon Ellen Eliza's room did look forbidding. There is simply nothing in it but the bed, a washstand and a chair. The best Persian portière was over the bed.

"Ellen Eliza's my servant. I under-pay her, and she stays because she doesn't know any better. She's as good and hard working and honest as any girl in New York, and that's the kind of room she has. You see she has to put the portière over the bed because there are not enough blankets. She's forgotten to hang it up in the drawing-room, I suppose, because it's washday."

I shut Ellen Eliza's door. He said nothing, and I went forward into the kitchen. The floor there is bare. There is a gas range, one chair, and a big deal table, with drawers in the bottom for flour and sugar. The window looks out between walls and over roofs to a bit of sky and fresh air.

"This is the kitchen," I said. "I'm more comfortable in the kitchen than anywhere else in the flat, because I bought that table myself. I didn't get it out of anybody. It's honestly mine. So here I am in the only part of my domain where I feel that I have a semblance of self-respect left and can look a man—a man like you—in the face."

I did so, and then I evidently had not enough self-respect to keep it up, for I immediately looked down again. He came close up to me, and said:

"Is that all your past?"

"It's—it's the main points of it," I said, beginning to feel a miserable conviction that I had completely disgusted him, "but—of course, there are fuller details. How did I do it? The way I used to go about it to get the things?"

"Let's put off the details till another time," he said. "You've talked for over half an hour, and I've had to listen. When do I get my innings?" and he stooped down and took both my hands, which must have felt like a pair of

frogs that had lived too near a malarial marsh and were having a chill.

"But," I insisted, "I think I ought to tell more of the details. It—it—was a sort of process. I think I began to learn it when I was a little girl at school and had no one to take care of me or ever give me presents or good times like the other girls. And as I got older I got so expert——"

"Never mind about it now. You don't want to shock me any more with this dreadful past of yours. Let's sit down on the table, since you like it better than Aunt Hilda's sofa."

"But I must tell——"

"No—you mustn't. I won't let you."

"But I ought to," I said, desperately. "I ought to spare nothing. I want you to know me as I am——"

"Stop. Not another word. I want to talk."

"But I must——"

"Then I'll stop you."

"You can't—you——"

But he could. I never had my conversation checked that way before. It was very effectual. I not only was stopped then, but I was stopped for some time afterward. And when I could have talked all desire for speech had left me. The only thing I said was one

short monosyllable. He said a good deal. But that is just between him and me, even one's diary doesn't hear it, standing up by the kitchen table that I bought with my own money.

I think Clementina came in then. I didn't see her because my face happened to be hidden, but I heard her say, in a loud, amazed voice:

"Will you kindly tell me, Angelica Van Gryse, what is going on here?"

I raised my face, and drew back from Mr. Masters, who kept one of my malarial frog hands, and said, breathlessly:

"There's nothing exactly going on, Clementina. I was just telling Mr. Masters how I furnished the flat, and we—we—got talking of something else which was more interesting, and, and, somehow or other, we—oh, Clementina, don't stand there looking like Patience on a Monument frowning at Joy—kiss me, and wish me happiness! Don't you know you're the only mother I've ever had, and you've got to act like the real thing now, because—I can't—talk any more."

Presently we were all sitting on the kitchen table—my table—and there Ellen Eliza found us when she came up with the wash.

THE LOCKET

HE gave my love his picture,
A common tintype, too,
His full length figure posing
Against a blurry view.
I gave my love a locket,
A dainty disk of gold,
Her monogram upon it
In tiny brilliants scrolled.

Alas! How oft to buy it
I stinted on cigars,
And saving up my nickels
Walked home beneath the stars.
So chide me not for swearing,
Though swearing is a sin,
For lo! she took my locket
To keep his tintype in!

MINNA IRVING.

THE EXTRA GIRL

By James Forbes

"SAY, Corona, loan the lady your rouge. I'm all out."

"Do you think I'll require it if I am to wear these?"

"You ain't suped much, or you'd know blushes don't show from front."

"This is my first offense."

"Say, girls, this is the deebutt of Miss——?"

"Smith."

"Smith? That was a quick come-back. I never seen any one christen theirselves quicker."

"Really?"

"Aw, don't mind me. I didn't mean to hurt your feelin's."

"Feelings are rather an unnecessary possession for a working girl, I suppose."

"They're excess baggage in the ballet business."

"It's awfully good of you all to lend me your things. I had no idea that it would be necessary to make up just to go on in the crowd or I would have been prepared. I brought a black wig."

"Say, you ain't goin' to cover up your hair. Girls, ain't she the ninny to wig that bunch of Leslie Carters? Gee, I wisht I had it. I wouldn't be in the Met. ballet—I'd be doin' leadin' business. It's a great emotional color. Dyed?"

"My, no."

"Switch?"

"Why, no."

"Girls, it's to her waist! You ain't used tongs, I can see that. I had beautiful hair I used to could sit on. But I've just fried it into fiddle strings. What are you laughin' at, Maree Le Blong—Becky Einstein that was? Ain't she got the nerve?"

"I am thoroughly greased. Ugh! It's horrid."

"Want some eye goo?"

"I might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb."

"Sure. Say, girls, what'd you think she ought to have—blue or black?"

"Please make me languishing. I've always been crazy to look oriental. I suppose it's because I'm Irish."

"So am I."

"Aren't you an Italian?"

"My name's Patricia Sullivan. That's all."

"But you look so—so—oriental."

"Is that polite for daygo?"

"Hush! the others might overhear you."

"The most of this bunch is from Baxter Street."

"What do I put on next?"

"Rouge—lots of it. We're miles from the Horseshoe. Them blue eyes and freckles are Irish."

"As Paddy's pig."

"That must be why I took a shine to you to-day at rehearsal."

"I'm very glad you did. You've helped me a great deal."

"Gee, but you threw a scare into us to-day."

"I what?"

"We thought you was a reporter."

"I should think a reporter was an old story to all of you."

"I got a couple on me staff. But I ain't been up against many lady reporters."

"A lady reporter! What made you imagine such a thing?"

"Your swell get-up didn't look much like an extra girl's."

"Why, I understood that the chorus

girls were all more gorgeous than the prima donnas. Cabs, diamonds, and all that sort of thing."

"Not at the Metropolitan. You're thinking of the house across the street, the Casino."

"Was I conspicuous?"

"You were silk lined."

"Are lady reporters silk lined?"

"Not the real kind. But I thought you was one of them special writers. They'd faint dead away if you called them reporters—they're lady journalists."

"Really?"

"They hit the management for a couple of seats, butt in back here durin' the show and make goo-goo eyes at the tenors. An' I ain't seen none of their stories."

"Dear, me! I am very glad I wasn't a lady journalist. You don't like them a little bit, do you?"

"We don't fall to the idea of a hen with a quill—that's not mine; that's Tommy Noonan's—four flushing around our dressin'-room: 'Oh, please let me see you make up.' 'Ain't it interestin'?' When they could give us cards and spades an' not half try. Not that we ain't been writ up—but that's by the real thing. I've been in the *Sunday Telegraph* twice this season."

"Oh, how nice. You like that sort of thing?"

"Oh, well, anything to help the show along. The press agent's takin' a fall to hisself. Why, the way they've done nothin' but boost these heavyweights with top notes'd make you tired. Guess there's a few—we know of several parties—what's them feather brokers names? Oh, well, it don't matter, except that they pays their little five for front row, aisle, just to see some of us dance."

"I am afraid I don't understand this black stuff, Miss Sullivan."

"Call me Pat. Every one around the Met. does. You use a toothpick. Say, who swiped my toothpick? Well! Tessa Lucca, it's a wonder you wouldn't treat yourself to a meal where they serve them. Ain't she on the cheap, though? Well, when you're quite

through, Becky—I beg pardon, Miss Le Blong—maybe some of the rest of us ladies might get a squint at that mirror. Oh, we wouldn't have you hurry, dear. Girls, somebody tell the call boy to hold the curtain. Melba ain't ready. Manners? Why don't you talk about somethin' you know somethin' about? That'll hold her for a while."

"I am sorry to be in the way."

"You've as much right here as she has. Don't pay no attention to me. I got to show 'em what's what or they'd be no livin' in the same dressin'-room with them. Sometimes Becky gets a nudge that she's built the opera house."

"Gracious! I look like a Red Indian!"

"You'd look like your own ghost, if you was any whiter. Anyway, that's half the fun of the ballet business—being beautiful. Is that Miss Le Blong laughing? Or maybe it's a horse sneezing in the livery stable across the way? I guess that'll crimp her. The idee! Ain't I posed for cigarette pictures?"

"It seems to me that I will have little on."

"You're forgettin' it's 'Aida' to-night and we're all little Egyptians."

"Do you think anybody in the audience would recognize me?"

"Your own mother wouldn't know you. Anyway she wouldn't want to."

"Heavens! Am I as gauzy as that?"

"You're all right. You mustn't mind a little thing like clothes, if you're goin' to be a regular extra here."

"Do you suppose they'd have me again?"

"Sure. Of course, the money ain't much."

"Isn't it?"

"Say, didn't you know you only get fifty cents a performance?"

"It was not mentioned in the ad. It simply read 'Wanted: Extra girls for "Aida." Apply stage entrance Metropolitan Opera House at eleven o'clock.'"

"Well, if you can get along for a while, I might work you in the ballet. I'm pretty solid with old Macaroni."

"Macaroni?"

"That's what we call old One-Two-Three-Four-Kick."

"Oh, the *maitre de ballet*."

"Come again. Say, spring that on Macaroni. It's a lead pipe you gets a steady job. An' I'll put a flea in his ear, too."

"Do you know that I didn't realize there were such kind-hearted, generous girls——"

"In the ballet?"

"In the world."

"You must have been up against it for fair. What kind of a bunch have you been training with?"

"You would be surprised should I tell you."

"Cheer up. You'll be talking through your wig in a moment."

"Hadn't I better put it on now?"

"Better let me do that for you—I meant to tell you to braid your hair tighter."

"My head does look lumpy."

"It'll be all right. Well, I guess if you're ready, we'll go rustle 'Props' for our palm branches. I'll introduce you to 'Props.' Tommy Noonan's his name—he's a swell fellow."

"Will you have to commence soon?"

"I ain't dancin' to-night—pip in me ankle. Got too gay at rehearsals yesterday. I'm just a populace to-night."

"I am so glad. Then we can be together."

"Sure. I'll put you wise to the whole game, back and front."

"The front? I don't understand."

"I'll put you next to who's who in the bunch of dudes and dowagers."

"Can you see them from the stage?"

"We always pipes them off."

"Can they see us?"

"Us? They don't notice us no more than the scenery."

"I'm glad of that. It makes me nervous to be stared at through opera glasses."

"You're a hit to be in this business."

"Oh, of course, I keep forgetting. What a lot of dressing-rooms on this floor."

"Those are for the 'merry.' Below's the cages for the canaries. That's his nobs gargling now."

"His nobs?"

"Larry, the tenor."

"Oh, you mean De Lara."

"Gee. Can't he hit them top notes? A bull's-eye every time."

"Do we pass his dressing-room?"

"We can. Would you like to meet him? I'll introduce you. He's a great friend of mine."

"He is?"

"Sure. Suppose we wait till after the show. You look better with your own hair."

"I think that would be better. How funny the scenery looks from the back."

"Hush! You must whisper. Hello, Ed. Where's Tommy? Had to see Nedda's maid? I like that. It seems to me he's getting pretty busy there. Madame sent for him? Oh, did she? Why couldn't you go? You could, if he wanted to send you. You tell Mr. Noonan from me, that the next time I have to hang around for props—well—just tell him—well—like that. Want to go over in the wings, Miss Smith, and rubber at the show?"

"If we won't be in the way."

"Don't you just love this 'Aida' music?"

"It's very melodious."

"You're dippy on Wagner, I can see that."

"I must confess to a preference for his music."

"I knew it. The minute I hear that melodious line of talk, I'm on. Verdi for Patricia Sullivan every time. God rest his soul!"

"I did not mean to be superior, Miss Pat."

"That's all right. You're educated up to him. I don't want to be."

"Don't you think 'Aida' is a little like Wagner?"

"Naw. If Wagner'd a-wrote it, we'd be standin' around like 'Take-me-homes for three-ninety-eight,' holdin' a sword or a crown on a cushion."

"Do you go on for pages?"

"Sure. That's when the Irish get it for havin' decent shapes. Them Guineas are built like the back of a hack, so they go home and stuff theirselves on macaroni. When I see 'Lohengrin' on the call, I feel like handin' in me two weeks."

"Why? Is it disagreeable?"

"How'd you like to stand around for about an hour doin' nothin' but lookin' Dutch. Nothin' doin' in the whole act but the scrap at the end. An' what's that? Gee, I'd like to put a little shillalah business in the finish."

"But there's 'Tannhäuser'."

"You don't call that game of ring-around-a-rosy in the first act—a ballet deevtization?"

"Isn't it difficult?"

"Playin' tag to music."

"But such music!"

"Anyway, Wagner's never done right by that ballet. If it wasn't for Verdi and Gounod we'd be havin' to be show-girls."

"Gracious, how rude those men are."

"Who's not treatin' you right?"

"They pushed that scenery into me."

"Oh, they don't respect no one."

"Who are they?"

"The stage hands."

"I'll wager they wouldn't bump a prima donna."

"They'd love to."

"Please let us stand out to one side, Miss Pat. They make me so nervous."

"Can't. Are you ready? Now look pleasant. A little more smile. That's it."

"Is somebody going to snap us?"

"No, it's our cue. Here's where we give the glad hand to Rhadames."

"Oh, my! I feel sick at my stomach."

"That's stage fright. Forget it. Da-da-dadum-da-da-da-dee-de. This is where I live—and all I can do is walk on. Ain't it bum luck?"

"Oh, Miss Pat, I am so afraid I'll get out of step."

"Don't you worry, I'll shove you through all right. Anyway, nobody out front knows we're on earth. They're all waitin' for his nob's."

"Who?"

"His Larryness."

"Oh!"

"Ballet bores them stiff. Paris for Pat when I gets my steamer money. There's where fly foot-work counts. Come on. This is us."

"What are we stopping for?"

"God knows. Ask the stage man-

ager. I guess we're makin' a picture. Ah, they're off at Guttentberg!"

"I have started with the wrong foot."

"Hush! Not so loud."

"Oh, I forgot."

"Never mind what foot, so's you start. Come on. We'll soon be across."

"I simply can't keep step."

"No wonder. Say you, Maria, quit your pushin'. When you get tired walking up my spines, Miss Le Blong, let me know, please. You must think I'm a gangway."

"This is bad enough, Miss Pat, but goodness, I don't know what I would do if I were obliged to come on alone."

"An' me dyin' for the chance."

"To be a prima donna?"

"Naw, a premyear. Gee, wouldn't it be great—havin' a toe solo and your name on the programme. I'd rouse mit the Sullivan. But wouldn't Patricia with Milly in front be swell on a three sheet."

"Milly?"

"Sure. Milly Patricia—French for Miss."

"Oh, I see. Why, we've stopped again."

"Here's where we line up. Here come me pals."

"The dancers?"

"Say, ain't my understudy fine and daisy? I don't think."

"Which one?"

"The third on the left. Now, she's opposite us. She'd ought to be makin' beds. There, look at that. She'll be on her ear before the night's over."

"Oh, my, do you think so?"

"And me gave her private rehearsals. And that across and around and kick—I'd rather do it than eat. And you'd know I was sayin' a good deal if you ever saw me punish a broiled live."

"It seems so acrobatic."

"The smile's the hard part of it. It's no cinch to stand on one toe with the other at quarter to six and look like the cat that's eat the canary."

"How can you? I should think it would hurt dreadfully."

"Old Macaroni's always in the wings. See him spottin' my understudy. There's a knock goes in for her to-night,

all right, all right. Honest, can you blame him? She looks like she's wakin' a corpse. Say, I am glad that's over. I was gettin' so nervous fer fear she'd queer the show. Good house to-night."

"Is it? I can't see anything but blackness."

"You ain't used to the lights. Next time we 'hail' Larry—put your arms across your face. That's it. Now look over—quick!"

"I saw a lot of round white spots."

"That's the baldheads."

"What did you say?"

"Baldheads."

"Oh, yes. There's so much noise."

"Ain't it grand? That's a great reception for Larry."

"They're very enthusiastic over Verdi to-night."

"Verdi? Back to the cheese box with him for all they care. They're stuck on Larry, I tell you."

"Is he a great favorite?"

"Is he? He's put up the price of violets."

"So Larry is popular with the society women?"

"He's the Horseshoe's white-haired boy is Larry."

"This is interesting. Tell me about it."

"Wait a moment. We must make room for the Brownies."

"The Brownies?"

"'Aida's' buncha relatives."

"Oh."

"Make a sneak down to the side. Say, you, Tessa Lucca, can't you let my lady friend pass? My lady friend pass? P-a-s-s! Ain't she the dum-head? Stop the show and give me a chord so I can sing it to you. Gee, don't they shove? Like a buncha scrub ladies in a football rush!"

"Dear me! It's like a bargain counter."

"Can you get a line on the boxes now?"

"Yes, I am beginning to distinguish them."

"Well, as I was sayin'—"

"Won't we disturb them?"

"The Guineas! No. They're going to sleep now, till the f'nally."

"Not really?"

"They've got their eyes open, but they're dead to the world. I'll bet the old ones can sing it in their sleep."

"Haven't we anything more to do?"

"Nothin' but look pleasant. This is a cinch opera for the extras."

"How odd to be looking at the boxes from here."

"Ain't they rubberin' at Larry to beat the band? He certainly does look elegant as Rhadames."

"I should think all that armor would tire him greatly."

"He don't care about a few pounds of tin more or less. He's thinkin' every woman in the house is singin' 'I'd leave my happy home for you-oo-oo.'"

"Yet he seems so indifferent."

"That's his gag."

"I don't understand."

"That icy eyes business."

"But you said he was a favorite."

"That's why. He knows his little book."

"But I shouldn't think the women would like that."

"Aw, quit you kiddin'. You know we all like it."

"I don't. I wouldn't give a snap of my finger for a man that was indifferent to me."

"Well, it's lucky for the management that every woman ain't like you. It would certainly hurt the matinées."

"Do you mean that women make themselves so ridiculous about him?"

"I should say so. Take that Mrs. Freddy Westervelt."

"Who?"

"Mrs. Freddy Westervelt. She's supposed to be a beauty."

"Is she?"

"Always wears white. She sits in that box near the stage."

"Where?"

"She isn't there yet. She'll be in later."

"You know her?"

"They ain't any of them left cards on me but I know them, all right, all right."

"How?"

"By the handy guide to opera in the front of the programme."

"You mean the list of box owners?"

"Yes. You know I'd work things different if I was runnin' this show shop. I'd advertise them."

"What?"

"Sure. 'Aida' to-night. Mrs. Freddy Westervelt and all the buncha bloods. They'd draw the coin."

"You amusing girl! They love notoriety, but hardly to that extent."

"Mrs. Freddy's booked for a dose of it."

"What do you mean? A divorce?"

"Oh, no. She's a widow. The real article. Gee, she's giving Larry a hard chase."

"How dreadful!"

"She may land him. She has a wad o' coin."

"And De Larry? Does he care about her?"

"No. She plays the game too hard. In her box every night he sings. Violets to the dressin'-room. Down in front every matinée. She's got some kind of a fan that's worth two pairs of hands and maybe she don't use it to boost Larry's game. Some of these days she'll chase up to the gallery so she can yell 'brava.'"

"And how do you know this?"

"We got a fine bunch of Sherlock Holmeses here, back and front, and when they gets together after the show, the broiler's kept busy."

"Possibly he may be in love with her."

"Tommy Noonan told me as I was comin' in that she sent a horseshoe to-night that took up half his dressin'-table, and he kidded it somethin' fierce."

"How does Tommy know?"

"He's great pals with Larry's dresser. Lean over. Tommy says him an' his dresser laughs theirselves to death over the line of soft stuff she writes to Larry."

"I don't believe it."

"Honest. An' then they kid the American women. The dresser started to hand out a bunch of conversation along these lines to Tommy. He eat all

he said. But as Tommy said afterward to me, 'Ain't it hell, that the women gives them the openin'?' It is, for fair."

"Indeed it is."

"Tommy says she's turned down a real fellow for this guy. You wouldn't believe a couple of top notes could get 'em as hard as that, would you?"

"Tommy seems a very observing person."

"I says he ought to be a reporter. The other night young Aspinwall——"

"Aspinwall?"

"That's his name—butts in after the performance with some friends of Nedda's. He gives them the shake and Nedda's maid asks Tommy to look him up. Where do you think he finds Aspinwall?"

"I have no idea."

"In Larry's room."

"Not really?"

"Yes. Tommy heard he'd read the riot act to Larry in great shape. Said all her friends were onto his game, an' if Larry tried any monkey business or got her into any scrape he'd squeeze the top notes out of him so fast 'twould make his head swim."

"Did any one hear them?"

"People knew there was a scrap on, but no names were mentioned. But Larry's kept right along jollyng Mrs. Freddy. He's goin' to sing at some swell affair she's goin' to have."

"Doesn't he do that for any one else?"

"No."

"Why?"

"He don't get the price he wants."

"It looks to me as though Mrs. Freddy were going to pay pretty heavily."

"Oh, not for Larry. He could make all kinds of money, singin' in private houses."

"I didn't mean money."

"Say, do you think any one with his voice is goin' to give any of it away? He'd charge you a thousand dollars for 'Thank you,' if he sang it. He's out for the coin."

"Even with Mrs. Freddy."

"Well, he might be singin' there just to spite Aspinwall. But if it's marryin', you can bet it ain't for love."

"What a lot you seem to know about it."

"Why shouldn't I. I'm in on the ground floor."

"Please explain yourself."

"He's stuck on me."

"You! Impossible."

"Sure. Ask any of the girls. Say, I think the way you're lookin' at me's insultin'."

"I beg your pardon, but you took me by surprise. You should feel flattered at your conquest."

"Not at all; it's easy. If it wasn't me it'd be some other——"

"Extra girl?"

"Like as not."

"And how have you captured the prize?"

"I give him what he gives the other women—an' it worries him."

"He's accustomed to have every one worship at his shrine. Pay tribute with violets."

"The fools! I gets their violets. Say, would you like the horseshoe?"

"Oh, it's simply incredible!"

"What's the matter?"

"Won't we ever get through?"

"Tired?"

"Horribly tired."

"You're cryin'. Say are you goin' to be sick. Maria! Tessa! Crowd up here. Poor thing. It's the new extra. I guess she ain't used to standin'. I'll get her into the wings. It's all right, Tommy. Stage fright. Pull up, Miss Smith, it'll queer you with old Macaroni. He don't like girls that get sick on him. Here, Tommy, get her into one of the dressin' rooms. De Lara's is handy."

"Oh, my God, no!"

"He wouldn't care."

"I would. I'm all right now. Get me upstairs."

"Sure, it's only another flight after this. Do you want a doctor?"

"No, a maid. Get me out of these things."

"Tommy, she's wanderin' in her mind. I thought she'd seen better days."

"Close the door, please."

"Tommy you stand outside. I may need you."

"Have him call a cab."

"Do you mean it?"

"Yes, yes. I must get out of here. Oh, won't they ever come off. What a fool I am. Oh, Pat, what a fool I am."

"Don't cry. It's only the excitement an' the novelty."

"Yes, that's it. The novelty of seeing Mrs. Freddy Westervelt as others see her; of having her discussed by chorus people——"

"What's she to you—— Gee! You're not——"

"Hush. Oh! for God's sake. Hush! Some one might hear you."

"No one'll ever hear it from me."

"I know that. I can trust you. I can, can't I?"

"Please, lady, don't. It's bad enough as it lays. Why did you let me talk like that?"

"Because I wanted to know."

"I feel like a dog."

"So do I, Pat. And as for De Lara——"

"He is one."

"Why, I thought——"

"Me one of the Mrs. De Lara's. I see myself. Mrs. Noonan it's goin' to be."

"Now I will congratulate you. What's that?"

"Tommy, about the cab."

"I must hurry. Don't bother about the make-up. I have a heavy veil. You've been so good. May I send the violets direct to Pat in future?"

"Where's Miss Smith? What's it to you, Miss Le Blong—where she is? Are you going downstairs, Tessa? Will you tell Tommy to wait for me, and not go shootin' off his gab? Is it any business of yours, Miss Le Blong, if I have been cryin'? I hate to see anybody suffer. I ain't been in this business so long I've lost all feelin'. De Lara got eight calls? What's it to me? Oh, you thought I'd like to know, did you, Becky, dear. Well, I don't give a——I didn't say it—if he never gets another."

SOME PLAYS AND PLAYERS

By Acton Davies

DECEMBER was a month filled with promise as far as the American stage was concerned.

With William Gillette 'out of the running this season it remained for the three other prominent American dramatists, David Belasco, Augustus Thomas and Clyde Fitch, to present the most important of their wares. Mr. Fitch had already scored a signal success with "Her Own Way," and equally as emphatic a failure with "Major Andre." Mr. Thomas, content to follow Mr. Belasco's well-known example of writing one play and one play only a year, had pinned his faith to "The Other Girl." Mr. Fitch, eager to redeem his Andre fiasco on the same stage, had arranged to produce his new picture of New York types, "Glad Of It," at the Savoy. Belasco's offering was "Sweet Kitty Bellairs," a dramatization of Egerton Castle's well-known novel, which wandered so far afield from the book that very little remained of it save the characters, the period and a single scene pertaining to the lock of red hair which aroused *Sir Jasper's* jealousy.

Since "Trilby," there has been no book dramatization which has scored such an emphatic success. Costume comedy has been pretty well played out on the New York stage, and to take these dead and gone characters with all their fripperies, their absurdities and furbelows, and make them seem almost human again, was a task at which most dramatists would have balked. It was a daring thing to do, and unless it proved triumphant it meant failure of the most unmitigated kind. Belasco risked all on it, and, his lucky star still being in the

ascendant, is scored the success of the season. From a spectacular standpoint in its one great scene, the ballroom at Bath, it excelled both "Du Barry" and the "Darling of the Gods." As a play, being a comedy, it did not equal either of them, but it has a second act, the scene in *Lord Verney's* chambers where *Kitty Bellairs* comes, masked, to implore him not to fight a duel with the enraged *Sir Jasper*, which, in its absorbing interest and succession of climaxes, is greater than any single act in either of his other plays. In selecting Miss Henrietta Crossman to create the stage *Kitty Bellairs*, Mr. Belasco again hit the bull's-eye. All the radiance and buoyancy, the roguishness and charm, which made her performance of *Nell Gwynne*, in "Mistress Nell," some years ago, so alluring and fascinating, has been filtered into this new rôle for the actress, and in addition there has been added a tenderer, more womanly note allied to a wit which is quite as keen as any of the jibes which fell to the share of *King Charles' mistress*.

Mark you, this woman of the Belasco play is not the Bellairs of Castle's novel. She was a heartless flirt, flippant, brilliant and fascinating if you will, but caring really nothing except for herself and her own pleasure. The *Bellairs* of the play is as warm-hearted, impulsive, illogical and lovable a daughter of Erin as Boucicault ever drew. You love her from the moment she first dawns on Bath, in company with her father's regiment of Inneskillins, to attend the ball given in their honor by the Fifty-first, to that moment when, after many heart-aches and much tribulation, brought

down on her by the catty belles and dowagers of Bath, she finally bids good-by to her lover, young *Verney*, as he starts for the war in the midst of a driving rainstorm. At Bath, *Mistress Belairs*, a dashing widow, who, according to her own account, has never had a chance in the matrimonial market, but had merely made the best of a bad bargain, encounters her old school friend, *Lady Julia Standish*; *Lady Julia* is a three months' bride, but very watery. She cries so perpetually that *Kitty*, from the outset, christens her the watering cart. *Lady Julia*, when they meet, is up to her brimming eyes in woe, for her three months' lord and master is already casting sheep's eyes at one of his old loves, *Lady Bab Flyte*.

Kitty, like a true Irish woman, prescribes a homeopathic dose. She advises *Lady Julia* to do a little flirting on her own account, no matter with whom, anything in trousers will answer the purpose, and to help her establish the requisite alibi, *Kitty* loans her a curl which has been sent to her in a *billet doux* from one of her own admirers, *Capt. O'Hara*, of the Inneskillins. The love letter is unsigned, so *Kitty* loans her that as well. *Sir Jasper* takes the bait like a young and hungry trout. His jealousy aroused, he hits on young *Lord Verney*, whom *Kitty*, after a day's inspection, has declared is the only man in Bath worth talking to, as the guilty man. He insults him publicly on some trivial pretext, and it is arranged that they shall fight a duel at dawn next morning. *Lady Julia*, in an agony of fright, rushes to *Kitty* for consolation. *Kitty*, quite as distraught on *Verney's* account as *Julia* is on her husband's, decides that they shall go masked together to *Verney's* lodging that night and implore him not to fight the duel.

The second act shows *Verney's* lodgings shortly before dawn. He has just come in accompanied by his second, *Capt. Spicer*, the villain of the play. The women come to him. *Spicer* adjourns to the dining-room, and *Julia* remains in the outer hall. *Kitty* is not only masked, but is enveloped in a huge opera cloak. She uses all her wiles to

persuade *Verney* not to fight, but in vain. He refuses unless she consents to show her face. Finally she unmasks. He is astonished, then enraptured, and gives his promise. At that moment the outer door is flung open and a bevy of half-drunken officers come in. They announce that they have come to see the last of *Verney*. *Kitty* hides, and *Verney* finally succeeds in inducing them to go into the dining-room. While he is holding them there another knock is heard at the bedroom door, and a woman's voice demands admission. The woman comes in. It turns out to be *Julia*, who on the advent of the officers had hidden in an inner room; as usual, she is on the verge of hysterics. When *Kitty* urges her, for the love of Heaven and all she holds dear, to pick up her cloak and run for it, *Julia* subsides into a chair and simply howls. At that instant there is another knock at the outer door, and *Sir Jasper's* voice is heard asking for *Verney*. *Kitty* clutches at the almost inanimate *Julia*, and strives to drag her out of the room. *Julia*, with a final moan of anguish, falls on the floor in a faint. It's one of those situations where action counts louder than words. The back of the room is cut off by a huge curtain. *Kitty* picks up the still unconscious *Julia*, and drags her towards the recess, clutching at the curtain to steady herself. The curtain falls, disclosing behind it a huge old-fashioned four poster shrouded in chintz hangings. To *Kitty* that four poster seems like a rock in a weary land. She throws *Julia* into the bed pell-mell, and jumps in after her, closing the curtains behind her. She is just in time, for at that moment from one room enter all the officers, still more illuminated with rye, and from the opposite direction *Sir Jasper* comes forward to assure *Verney* that he has made a mistake. *Verney* accepts his apology, and *Sir Jasper* announces his intention of hurrying home to his poor, distracted, misjudged wife, when *Spicer*, out of sheer devilry, announces that he has a suspicion there is a woman concealed in the room. *Verney* betrays himself by rush-

ing towards the bed. The officers, after chaffing him, propose to drink a toast to the fair but reckless lady. Six of them pick up the huge four poster and move it down stage. The others joining hands and executing an impromptu war dance cavort around the bed.

Then *Spicer*, spying the toe of a slipper peeping from the bed curtains, snatches it. Holding it aloft, he pours champagne into it, and proposes that they shall all drink a bumper to the lady's health. The slipper is passed from man to man. It finally reaches *Sir Jasper*. He drinks from it, and then, glancing at the jeweled buckle, flies into a paroxysm of rage. The slipper is *Lady Julia's*. He draws his sword, and rushes at *Lord Verney*, who stands with arms outstretched warding all comers from approaching the bed. He is in his dressing-gown and defenseless. *O'Hara*, who is in full uniform, draws his sword and thrusts it into *Verney's* hands. The men engage. Suddenly one of the officers cries, "He'll kill *Verney*." At that instant a woman's voice shrieks from the bed, "Wait! Wait!" and *Kitty*, holding the curtains tight behind her back, appears on the edge of the bed. The *Inneskillins*, her father's brother officers and her owl sweethearts, recoil in horror, exclaiming: "*Kitty! Our Kitty!*" The officers of the Fifty-first become sober to a man. There is one of those awful pauses which we all encounter once or twice in a lifetime. Then *Kitty*, with the ghost of her old laugh, exclaims: "Would one of you gentlemen kindly favor me with my shoe?" Turning to *Sir Jasper*, she adds, with emphasis: "I'm a bit particular about it, because I borrowed the buckle from *Lady Julia* yesterday, and I wouldn't lose it for worlds!" Then she slips it on, with the exclamation: "Phew, but it's damp!"

After that, woman-like, *Mistress Belairs* strives to explain. But it's no use. The English officers turn away. Her own dear Irishmen gaze at her in pained and heartbroken silence. Turning to *Verney*, she asks him to leave the room; "And don't forget to shut the dure,"

she adds, as he prepares to leave. She tells them, then, that she had taken an interest in the lad, and had come there for the sole purpose of persuading him not to fight the duel. But she might as well have told them a tale about the sea serpent. One by one the men slink towards the door. *Kitty*, indignant now, in a ladylike but Irish way, tells them all that if they don't believe her they may go to the devil. She picks up her cloak, and, exclaiming, "My mask! I've left my mask!" steps back into the bed again. *Verney* returns, and before a man has had a chance to make his exit, he announces, "Gentlemen, I have the pleasure to inform you that the lady you have just seen here has done me the honor to promise to become my wife;" the bed curtains quiver for a moment, and then the figure of *Kitty*, masked and cloaked, but looking a trifle shrunken, now steps from the bed.

Sir Jasper, so delighted at discovering his own mistake, is charitably inclined for the moment to all kinds of sinners. He steps forward, bows and gallantly offers his hand. He escorts the hooded figure to the door, where it promptly picks up its skirts and runs as though it had just seen a mouse. Of course the woman in the cloak is *Lady Julia*. One by one the men slink out; the Irishmen refusing to take *Verney's* hand. Through the windows the dawn is breaking, the birds in the trees are beginning to chirp, and *Verney* is left standing by the writing desk apparently alone. Then a figure slips out of the old four poster and draws near to him. It is *Kitty* enveloped in *Julia's* cloak. *Verney* starts back in amazement. "For what you have just done for me," she says, brokenly, "you can have my soul. I could throw myself in the fire for you! For, *Verney*, I love you. I love you!"

The third act shows the ball on the following night. *Spicer* has spread the tale. The ballroom and its corridors are ablaze. It is a pageant of fair women and brave men such as no stage has shown before. It seems in very truth a living picture of a long dead day. The massing of the soldiers, the

dances in the corridors and balconies, the ceaseless chatter of the belles and beaux brings old Bath back to life again. These men and women, in spite of their wigs and patches, are made by the remarkable skill of the dramatist and stage manager just as real, as vivid and as human as we of this latter day. *Kitty* arrives, and is flaunted, of course. Every drop of her Irish blood gets up, and she ballyrags her feminine traducers with a grace and acidity which couldn't have been more effective if she had used a shillalah. Then comes the hurried call to arms. The dance breaks up after the manner of that famous night in Brussels before Waterloo. All the attributes of Byron's poem are there, even to the "Sound of Revelry."

Verney, who has been sent on a mission by his uncle, *Col. Villiers*, in order to keep him out of the way, returns just in time to find *Kitty* almost routed, and together they determine to make a last stand. As soon as his uncle ascertains that *Verney* intends to marry *Mistress Bellairs*, he places him under arrest and demands his sword. It is the hour that the lad has waited for ever since he entered the army. *Kitty* realizes this, and though her big Irish heart is breaking, she determines to sacrifice herself once more. She goes to *Verney*, and flaunts him in the face of all his brother officers. Tells him that she has only flirted with him for a lark. That she doesn't care a rap for him. That she's sick and tired of him, then bids him apologize to his uncle and regain his sword. *Verney* refuses to believe her, but she insults him again, then ridicules him. Finally, in a rage, he tears her bunch of shamrocks from his breast, stamps on them, and the old colonel coming up with his sword at that moment, the lad accepts it without a murmur. The officers march out of the ballroom. The crowd, weeping and cheering, burst out into "God Save the King," and *Kitty*, heartbroken, but still triumphant, is left alone.

The last act is chiefly remarkable for the realistic rainstorm in which *Kitty*, after a reconciliation with her lover and the defeat of all her enemies, watches

him start to the wars. Next to Miss Crossman, whose performance of *Kitty* is incomparably the best achievement of her career, Mr. Edwin Stevens, as the irascible but aristocratic old *Col. Villiers*, scores the greatest hit. His drunken scene in the second act is a brilliant example to all winebibbers of how to get drunk like a gentleman. Two of his lines are invariably greeted with loud applause. One of them is, "A colonel is never drunk," and the other, although not strictly original, is always received as though it were brand-new, "A gentleman should be a gentleman, drunk or sober."

Clyde Fitch's "Glad Of It," produced at the Savoy, disclaimed all idea of being a play at all, and was announced as a series of scenes of New York life. Its first act was a portrayal of life in one of the big department stores, and to say that it was graphic is only true. There was the woman from Jersey who had come to town for the express purpose of changing the articles which she had bought before; the elevator boy, with his perpetual cry of "Ladies' underwear, crockery, cloaks and clocks"—a cry which, by the way, invariably raised a roar of laughter; the tired salesgirl, always standing on one foot, gazing vacantly and with unseeing eyes right through the head of her customer, while she jabbed her pencil perpetually into her hair; and a thousand and one other characterizations of life in a department store as it is known, to their sorrow, by all women who shop.

In the second act Mr. Fitch tries to treat a stage rehearsal with equal realism, but here, unfortunately, he becomes so technical that only an actor thoroughly up in all the *argot* of the stage could hope to follow. The two other acts are laid at a seaside boarding house, and they depict all the horrors of such a resort in a manner as harrowing as some of the recent atrocities at Kishinef. In many of his scenes Mr. Fitch's wit and satire are at their best, but "Glad Of It," as a whole, is scarcely likely to enjoy a long run for two reasons:

In the first place, it's much too diffuse,

too long, and in the second it's a question whether women, whose sense of humor is never too strong under any circumstances, are going to be amused by a play which deals with many of the phases and incidents of their everyday life. To a woman who has been shopping all morning until she hasn't got a leg left to stand on, "Glad Of It," with its realistic scene in *Boltman's* shop, is likely to prove altogether too much like carrying coals to Newcastle.

Augustus Thomas, in "The Other Girl," at the Criterion, has also devoted his play to New York latter-day life; but it is written in a sprightlier and more facile way than Mr. Fitch's. The parson, the pugilist and the young lover in "The Other Girl," are all original and remarkably clever characterizations. In his drawing of what, for want of a better term, one might call "society life," Mr. Thomas is distinctly inferior to Mr. Fitch, and for that reason some of his other characters in "The Other Girl" seem a trifle out of focus. They talk like characters in a ladylike novel in the *Ladies' Home Journal*. But the pugilist, as played by Lionel Barrymore, is such a capital, heart-whole sort of fellow, and the character of a young and good-natured reporter is drawn by Mr. Thomas on such natural lines that the general effect of the farce is distinctly bright and unusual.

Mr. Thomas is the first dramatist in our experience who has ever shown a newspaper man as he appears in real life. This rôle is admirably played by Richard Bennett, and Joseph Wheelock and Elsie De Wolfe also share in the honors won by this unusually clever cast. "The Other Girl" will probably never attain to the wide popularity of Mr. Thomas' "The Earl of Pawtucket"; still, at the same time, it is one of the few plays of this barren season which are distinctly well worth seeing.

But it must not be imagined that during the midwinter season the Americans have had things all their own way. English playwrights have sent over at least three distinctly novel offerings. The first was George Bernard Shaw's comedy, "Candida," which was pro-

duced by Mr. Arnold Daly and Miss Dorothy Donnelly at a special matinée at the Princess, and at once won such general favor that it has since been put on for a general run. To the average theatergoer "Candida" may seem slightly *caviare*, but it is none the less a play of exceptional interest to those who care to dip beneath the surface of things theatrical.

In a totally different vein is "Merely Mary Ann," by I. Zangwill, in which Miss Eleanor Robson has achieved a distinct success at the Garden. *Mary Ann* is the slavey in a London lodging house—not the ordinary brand of little cockney slattern by any means, but a sweet-faced girl who has not yet lost the roses from her cheeks, nor the pretty accent which she acquired in her native village. Among the lodgers in the house is an impecunious musician. *Mary Ann* blacks his boots, and adores him from afar. Finally the musician, who isn't troubled with any superfluous morals, begins to take notice himself. For a time things look rather dark for little *Mary Ann*. The musician informs her that he is going away to live in the country, and she, in perfect innocence, proposes that he shall take her along. The musician is not at all averse. For the first time he takes her in his arms, and kisses her, then exclaims: "Why, you poor little innocent, I believe you're another Topsy, who just growed, and don't even know who made you."

"Oh, yes, sir," replies *Mary Ann*, quite simply, as the curtain falls, "God made me."

It is impossible to describe in print the simple pathos of this climax, which brings the musician up with a round turn. Eventually, of course, *Mary Ann* inherits a great fortune, and finally marries the man she loves, who proposes to her in due course in a highly respectable manner. This last act is a sop to both Mrs. Grundy and Cerberus, and it robs the play of something of its artistic charm. It is not a necessary evil, but rather a necessary goodness, and it sends the audience home to dream of *Mary Ann* as being happy ever after—as if such a fate could ever possibly

fall to the wife of a musician in real life!

And now as to J. M. Barrie's much-vaunted stomach play, "Little Mary," which some ribald wag at the first performance at the Empire nicknamed "Sentimental Tummy." From an artistic standpoint, this comedy can only be regarded as one of Mr. Barrie's little jokes. To write a play with the stomach as a heroine is no sinecure even for an appendicitis specialist, and when the New York critics had got through with poor "Little Mary," she was so scarred that she might, from outward appearances, have suffered from this particular malady at least half a dozen times. There are one or two very clev-

erly written scenes in it, but the play as a whole is very light for a whole evening's entertainment.

Curious as it may appear, the New York public seems to have awakened to the fact this season that for their two dollars a seat they have a right to demand not only fine settings and a good company, but something in the way of a plot as well. In this instance, Mr. Charles Frohman has supplied full measure in the way of settings and actors, but Mr. Barrie for once has failed to live up to his end of the bargain, and provide a play. The consequence is that "Little Mary" has been playing to comparatively empty stomachs—I mean houses.



THE SNOW PEAKS

THE hills are bowed about their feet,
The plains lie prone and far below,
They lift their heads their lord to greet,
In sacerdotal robes of snow.

Shades unassoiled their matins throng,
When sunrise lights its candles high,
And cloudy incense trails along
The eastern altar of the sky.

The roll of thunder's organ tone,
Their silences of noon has stirred.
To their enduring hearts of stone
The storm winds preach a holy word.

Strict vigil through the dark they keep,
Through night's tall temple windows they,
While all the world is wrapped in sleep,
The stars of heaven behold and pray.

JOHN CURTIS UNDERWOOD.

FOR BOOK LOVERS

THOSE who like James Whitcomb Riley's verse will find his new poems collected under the title "His Pa's Romance," from the Bobbs-Merrill Company. There are two excellent tributes to the benefits of work; "His Room" and "Toil," a latter-day contradiction to some of the same poet's graceful poems of earlier years, in which, like Omar, he sang the glories of loafing times.



The Stokes Company publishes "The O'Ruddy," the novel upon which the late Stephen Crane was at work when he started home on a vain quest for health. It was his wish that his friend, Robert Barr, should finish the story in case of his death, which event the gifted young writer anticipated.

O'Ruddy is a young Irish gentleman, whose fortunes are low as his spirits are high. His adventures, fights, and a notable duel and delightful love affair occupy over three hundred and fifty lively pages. Dramatic incidents abound, and the typical faults of the Irishman as well as his, in this case, splendid loyalty, courage and charming manner of making love are so fascinatingly set forth as to mark this character in fiction as singularly adapted for the *Matinée Idol*.



"The Main Chance," from the Bobbs-Merrill Company, by Meredith Nicholson, is filled with youthful romance, and has a sweet, gray-eyed girl for the heroine.

There is a big business deal through the plot that lends the proper interest

to the practical reader. But the right man wins in the end, and the hero and the gray-eyed one come into their own.



"McTodd," by C. T. Cutcliffe Hyne, the Macmillan Company, publishers, bring the hardy Scotch hero through perils in the Arctic seas and many adventures which he himself would call "Very humorous."

He distinguishes himself by his ability as an engineer, his thirst and his cleverness in a fight. McTodd is as interesting in his Scotch sins as in his Scotch virtues, and he makes friends with Eskimos, scientists and ladies fair and otherwise, but through all his travels he remains a true son to his old mother in Ballindrochater.



Justin Huntley McCarthy has dedicated his book, "The Proud Prince," from the Russell print, to his friend, E. H. Sothern, who has personated the hero in the acting version of the story.

The proud prince of the story is rather more convincing than the prince of the play, as mystery and magic are much more attractive and possible between book covers than with calcium and footlights as a setting.

The book is illustrated with photographs posed for by Mr. Sothern and members of his company.



Agnes and Egerton Castle are the authors of the "Incomparable Bellairs," published by Stokes, a dainty romance of the time of powder and patches,

beaux and belles, sedan chairs and many bottles of port at dinner.

A charming prologue discloses the identity of the heroine, the incomparable Kitty, while a verse from Austin Dobson's "Proverbs in Porcelain" is the only preface. The dedication is to Dobson:

"Who by his delicate art, has made all that is shapely and charming in the eighteenth century live again for us, as with a fragrance of old potpourri and a rustle of brocades no loom holds now the secret of; as with a lost grace to the dance of the little high heels stilled long ago and the measures of a forgotten music."



"Impertinent Poems," by Edmund Vance Cooke, were originally printed in AINSLEE'S and the *Saturday Evening Post*, and are now published by the Forbes Company, of Boston.

There is much common-sense philosophy expressed here in terse rhyme. The poem "Plug" is one of the most un-beautiful bits of truth ever penned:

"Can you make a mile a minute? Do you want to make it two?"

Plug!

Are you good and up against it? Well, the only thing to do

Is plug.

Oh, you'll find some marshy places where the crust is pretty thin,

And when you think you're gliding out you're only sliding in.

But the only thing for you to do is think of this and grin

And plug!"



"The Mystery of Murray Davenport," Robert Neilson Stephens, the author, published by Page, of Boston, is a novel with a daring theme suggesting the theatre as a fitting place for its exploitation. Murray Davenport in the opening chapters is an incapable, a man by whose ideas an unscrupulous sharper profits, paying Davenport only a stipend from the gains.

Davenport resolves to change his identity as well as his name, and by

means of chemicals, racial operations and dyes effects a complete transformation. His new and unrecognizable bodily guise gives him courage and his spirit thrives. He asserts his rightful manhood, and incidentally wins back the sweetheart that he had lost in his old hoodooed form. An enthralling book.



The Century Company publishes "Pa Gladden," the story of a common man, by Elizabeth Cherry Waltz. Pa Gladden is one of the plain, unvarnished noblemen made by nature, optimistic, somewhat spiritual, but filled with kindness for humanity. These splendid, homely characters of fiction have their following among the book lovers, and Pa Gladden is a notable addition to the host of heroes.



"Johnnie," is a story by a boy, the author, E. O. Laughlin, Bobbs-Merrill Company, publishers. He is a country lad, and his career is not a startling one, but is interestingly written of, with no trace of blood and thunderism to imbue the modern boy with any wish to kill Indians as a pastime.



Beatrice Harraden delights in character study, and in her story, "Katherine Frensham," she depicts life as it is affected by the influence of others on the individual. There is a widower and his son and the heroine, who, coming upon the scene like sunlight, makes beauty and harmony for them out of discord and spiritual strife. Dodd, Mead Co.



"A Lad of the Friels" is by Seumas MacManus, and is from the print of McClure, Phillips & Co. It is a story of the Irish peasantry, and the dedication, which is repeated in Gaelic, is poetic and

beautiful with the feeling that the writer's country and its people are remarkable for. One can almost hear the harp strings sound to the music of these words:

"Before putting this book from my hands, I wish to bring into it ETHNA, your name; because your kindly heart went out to the widow's Pat and his homely friends.

"And because—though you knew it not—Ellen Burns was a part of your sweet self.

"And because now, for the good Irish women and men who weep you, the pages of my poor book will breathe a fragrant breath.

"One day before you looked your last on the land for which your heart beat, the dimming light in your eyes leapt up when I whispered that your name would be linked with the little story which your partial heart loved so fondly.

"And now, oh, best beloved, ere yet the sod is green that presses upon your breast, I bring there my little offering.

"SEUMAS."



"Little Henry's Slate" is from the press of William S. Lord, and W. D. Nesbit is responsible for the philosophic reflections of little Henry, which appear upon illustrated slates reproduced from the *Chicago Tribune*. The small book is a pamphlet in a box—not a red box—and is bound with grocery twine. Once again we smile with Chicago.



"Children of Men," by Bruno Lessing, McClure, Phillips & Co., is a collection of vivid short stories with the Jew in his romantic, poetic and humorous phases as the theme in each. The hardships of the sweatshop are portrayed emphatically.



"The Literary Guillotine," an anonymous set of sketches which John Lane, The Bodley Head, puts out, is a peculiarly

shoppy book, the style being rather suggestive of John Kendrick Bangs at his worst, or his best, whichever way you look at it.

There is no special reason why this book should have been written, and its humor will never add to any nation's gayety.



Joseph Conrad is the prophet of the mysticism of the sea. Tennyson wrote of the "one clear call" in "Crossing the Bar," but few sailors understood it, though they can hear and recognize many of the voices that come from the hundred throats of the ocean. His latest books, "Youth" and "Falk," McClure, Phillips & Co., contain a series of sea tales, but not of the conventional "Wreck of the Grosvenor" type. Mr. Conrad has something new to say, and he says it with the true storytelling genius. Whether he tells it before a fire or on the deck of a yacht he has that intangible power of compelling attention that makes the reader feel himself to be first, one of the circle of listeners and then one of the actors in the drama that is being gradually disclosed with infinite, because unconscious, art, and when the tale is finished he knows all about the hopes, and fears, and pangs of a struggle against shipwreck in midocean, or the soul-destroying conflict with the nameless horror of an African wilderness. The simple, colloquial style in which these extraordinary tales are told carries conviction and preserves them from melodramatic effect; added to which is the always saving grace of humor of which there is just enough to lighten the lump.

Mr. Conrad's are books we commend most heartily and unqualifiedly.



"Borlase & Son," by T. Baron Russell, John Lane and Company, is the story of an English shopkeeper's son and his revolt against conditions existing in his father's shop toward employee and the public generally. We have our sweatshops, but no evil that

corresponds to the English shop, with its poorly paid, miserably lodged and fed and overfined clerks.



Mr. W. W. Jacobs has just put forth, for our delight, another collection of his unique stories. It is called "Odd Craft," published by Scribners' Sons, and odd it surely is. The characters, for the most part, are the old tide-water friends to whom the author has introduced us in "Many Cargoes," and from whom he has drawn a sort of humor that is, so far as we remember, unmatched anywhere else. But there are some new faces among them. Notably Lawyer Quince, whose chief claim to the position of local Solon rests, in our judgment, on his ready acceptance of a tip from a quick-witted girl, and Bob Pretty, the poacher, who has a veritable genius for getting out of difficulties.

Ginger Dick and Peter Russet, and others of their type, are, however, the real heroes of these stories, and their biographer's talent has been shown in his faculty for getting beneath the rough and, even repulsive, exteriors to the human element which displays itself principally in their juvenile enjoyment of pleasure. The result is irresistibly funny, and withal, somewhat pathetic, when one stops to consider their inevitable hardships. Any notice of this book would be incomplete without a reference to Will Owen's illustrations, which are really illustrations, in that they supplement and clarify the text. To be sure they are caricatures, but the strain is not extended to the breaking point.



Hamlin Garland's new story, "Hesper," published by Harper & Bros., is one of the somewhat familiar types which recount the adventures of a high-bred young woman in unconventional surroundings of a Western mining settlement (it might as well have been a ranch). Antagonistic at first, she finally surrenders to the charm of the wilder-

ness, and incidentally, of course, finds a lover.

She goes there from New York with her brother, a delicate youth whose state of health makes the change necessary. There is the usual and necessary quota of reckless and hair-raising adventures, of rough characters and of mining camp conflicts, all of which, together with an expelled West Point cadet—who, it is easily guessed, is the lover—complete Ann Rupert's transformation from a metropolitan society belle into a breezy, reckless, Western girl.



Rider Haggard's "Stella Fregelius" is like a Corelli story, so abundant is it in spinal shivers, with strange voices, gales, tempests and visions clustered about the story of an unhappy love.

Stella is quite human in the early chapters, although "she knew the truth, indeed, to whom it was given to see before the due, determined time of vision, but still she was troubled with the human heart and weighed down by the flesh over which she had triumphed." Later, Stella becomes a lovely ghost, and walks regularly keeping appointments with an earthly lover. Longmans, publishers.



Mr. G. K. Chesterton, who has recently awakened London literary circles, and seems to be making a solid reputation for himself, has collected in one volume, which he calls "Varied Types," published by Dodd, Mead & Co., a series of short papers from the London *Speaker* and the London *Daily News*. In spite of the studied effort, so apparent in these short essays, to produce an effect by merely saying something startling, one cannot but be impressed by the tone of earnestness that pervades them which, in view of the author's unquestionable literary talent, to use no stronger term, gives promise of a brilliant maturity. For with all his paradox of style he is subject to a wholesome sanity that seems certain,

sooner or later, to correct his youthful faults and subdue, without destroying, his youthful enthusiasm. After reading these essays one cannot return to Ruskin, or Carlyle, or Charlotte Brontë, or Tolstoy, without a new and deeper understanding of them.

A good example of Mr. Chesterton's fondness for paradox is his remark of Charles I.: "He could not keep the Ten Commandments, but he kept ten thousand commandments," or his view of William Morris as being a distinguished reformer because he never finished anything, or that Bret Harte "was not an American humorist."

All his opinions are those of an alert, aggressive mind dominated by an overmastering sincerity of purpose, fighting, aimlessly sometimes, against the dull credulity of a faithless generation, to use one of his favorite paradoxes.



"Pigs in Clover," by Frank Danby, published by Lippincott, is a book of somewhat doubtful character—some critics, indeed, may say that it is absolutely without character. It is unquestionably a book of strong dramatic quality and well told, but we cannot but believe that the theory upon which the tale is built, namely, that to a well-born woman of unstained purity and refined and cultivated tastes, a purely sensual attraction is irresistible, is absolutely and wholly false. However potent such an attraction may be when duly subordinated to less selfish emotions, it is unquestionable that, of itself, it offers no temptation to any healthy-minded woman.



"Calderon's Prisoner" and "Cyril Vane's Wife," are two novelettes by Alice Duer Miller, bound in one volume, by Scribners' Sons. They are what is known as society novels, and evidently the work of one "to the manner born." Though the actors in both are metropolitan, some scenes are laid in Central and South America, with which

the author is also manifestly on terms of intimacy. The love element is predominant, and they make extremely good, light reading.



"The Daughter of a Magnate," from Scribners, is a railroad romance, written of expertly, yet never losing the note of human interest, alike as it is, in passenger coach and private car. This is a narrative of the new school that holds our railroad men and bridge builders as fitting material for heroism as the knights of lance and spear. Frank H. Spearman is the clever author.



The natural gas regions do not, at first blush, offer a very promising background for a romance, suggesting, as they do, something that smacks rather of melodrama. But Arthur Stanwood Pier has produced a very creditable story without any strain upon the credulity of his readers in "The Triumph," published by McClure, Phillips & Co. It is primarily a love story, and he takes the hero and heroine through difficulties that are neither unusual nor insurmountable to a perfectly convincing conclusion. The villain in the plot and his coadjutors are types that are to be found in any of the gas or oil regions.



"The Hermit," by Charles Clark Munn, Lee & Shepard, is a tale of the Maine woods, with one of those forest heroes that fiction writers have loved so much of late. It will appeal to wholesome-brained lovers of sympathy, simplicity and the humors of country village life.



"Good-by, Proud World," by Ellen Olney Kirk, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., has a newspaper girl for a heroine. She falls heir to a fortune, and her life thereafter is in pleasant paths.